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PNA rejects Israeli offer brought by Ross

GAZA (R) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has rejected a proposal that Israel beef up troops at Gaza checkpoints to squeeze more trucks through an intense security procedure, a PNA spokesman said on Saturday. PNA Secretary General Tayeb Abdul Rahim said U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross raised an Israeli proposal on Friday at talks in Gaza to add 100 soldiers at two border points. Mr. Abdul Rahim said the proposal was rejected because it implied Israel intended to continue to bar Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank from entering Israel. The ban was imposed after suicide bombers from Gaza killed 21 Israelis in January. He said it was also rejected to emphasise Israel was increasingly treating Gaza and the West Bank differently. "If Israel is seeking separation, it should treat the Gaza Strip and the West Bank as one geographic area and separate both territories from Israel," he said. At the end of March, Israeli troops began escorting Palestinian lorries from Gaza into Israel to facilitate traffic.

Amman municipal elections set

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Saturday has decided to set the number of members of the Greater Amman Municipal Council at 40 and divided the municipality's areas into 20 electoral constituencies. The government set July 11 as the date for holding Amman municipal elections as is the case with the general municipal elections which will take place in all municipalities around the Kingdom. Twenty council members will be elected directly by citizens and the other 20, including the mayor, will be appointed by the Cabinet or the prime minister. Acting Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh, who chaired a four-hour Cabinet session on Saturday, decided to appoint the Amman governor as chairman of the Amman elections committee. The Cabinet also approved signing agreements with other countries and setting up delegations. The Council of Ministers approved exchanging memos of understanding which will be signed between Jordan and Japan on Japanese aid worth $8.9 million to the Ministry of Health. The Cabinet authorised the planning minister to sign the memos.

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Jordan, Canada to boost economic cooperation

Free trade agreement to be negotiated

Combined agency dispatches

OTTAWA — Jordan has emphasised the role Canada's public and private sectors could play in the Middle East in general and the Kingdom in particular, calling for increased Canadian interest io the opportunities available in the era of peace.

One of the immediate prospects for Jordanian-Canadian cooperation is a free trade agreement.

His Majesty King Hussein and the delegation accompanying him on his current visit to Canada held a meeting with Caoadian businessmen in Ottawa late Friday for an exchange of views and to brief them on the Middle East peace process, the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, and Jordanian-Palestinian relations.

Earlier, the King and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien held a press conference where they said Jordan and Canada planned to launch immediate negotiations on a free trade agreement.

Trade between the two countries last year totalled 15 million Canadian dollars (U.S. $11 million), with Canada having a surplus in the exchange.

Commenting on a free trade accord being discussed between Canada and Israel, King Hussein said, "we certainly would like to have the same arrangement. I know our specialists and experts will get to it and produce some tangible results very rapidly."

King Hussein voiced pride in Jordanian-Canadian relations.

He also thanked Canada for its assistance to Jordan, especially in prospecting for oil and natural gas, noting that through this help Jordan managed to discover natural gas.

He also voiced appreciation for the opportunities Canada provides for Jordanian students in its institutions.

He voiced hope that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty will be a cornerstone in achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East and an example to be followed by others.

He said he hoped Canada will be a partner in building a new Middle East that enjoys peace and stability.

The Canadian prime minister said he discussed with the King the situation in the Middle East, expressing Canada's desire to help countries involved in the peace process.

He said he stressed to the King Canada's desire to maintain very good relations with Jordan and added that the talks dealt with commercial ties.

"We said (at the talks) that we were happy to discuss arrangements for a free trade with Jordan as we did with neighbooring countries and we look forward to that," said Mr. Chretien.

Answering questions by reporters, King Hussein said he hoped that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations would be crowned with success and that the two sides would be able to overcome problems facing them.

He said he was boping that the Israeli-Palestiniao agreement would enable people on both sides to start to trust each other. There are some people who are against the peace process, he noted, recalling the Hebron massacre and other acts aiming to sabotage the process.

He said Jordan stands ready to support all peace efforts and stressed that Jordan will in no way talk on behalf of the Palestinians or impose its views on them.

He said Jordaoian-Palestinian relations were very close and said they will take their formal shape in the future when the Palestinians decide in an atmosphere of freedom the future of these relations.

King Hussein said he was optimistic regarding Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese negotiations because he said there was no substitute for peace in the Middle East.

The King also reaffirmed that Jordan sought a balanced, secure, and lasting peace in the Middle East.

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His Majesty King Hussein with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien in Ottawa late Friday (AFP photo)

Turkey withdraws some of its forces from north Iraq

ZAKHO (Agencies) — Turkey began pulling some of its 35,000 troops out of northern Iraq on Saturday and Kurdish officials said bundreds bad left the region crossing border mountains on foot.

Colonel Dogu Silahcioglu, of the army staff in Diyarbakir in southeast Turkey, said that a brigade of 3,000 soldiers "which bas finished its mission in a zone of oorthern Iraq" had returned to Turkey.

But he did not specify which region they had left and added only that no other withdrawals were "scheduled for the moment."

The Turkisb Foreign Ministry confirmed tbe partial withdrawal saying the troops had returned to their base in Silopi, the last Turkisb town before tbe border with Iraq.

Members of the Kurdistan Democratie Party (KDP) in the village of Kani Masi, just a few hundred metres south of the border mountains, said they bad seen 500 soldiers late Friday walking back to Turkey across the range.

"Bot we don't know what that means because today (Saturday) seven helicopters were flying from Turkey to an area south of Kani Masi. We believe they brought new troops," KDP official Hassan Madullah said.

Rebels of the Kurdish Laboor Party (PKK), have been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984.

Iraq meanwhile called on the U.N. Security Council to force Turkey to end its military offensive in northern Iraq, tbe official news agency INA reported Saturday.

"The Security Council has not taken any measures against the Turkish invasion, it has not denounced it," Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahaf said in a letter to the council, quoted by INA.

"The council faces a real challenge concerning the violation (by Turkey) of Iraq's sovereignty, independence, security, integrity and unity."

Mr. Sahaf wrote that "if the (Iraqi) national authority was present in northern Iraq ...the Kurdish terrorist gangs would not have spread there.

"The reason behind the appearance of the terrorist gangs is the U.S. interference in northern Iraq, a policy that has harmed the security and safety of the region and will lead to even greater damage if it continues."

The Turkish defence minister, Mehmet Golhan, rejected the notion that Ankara was howing to demands to wind up its campaign against PKK Kurdish rebels.

"Whatever the West says, we will not pull out before completing the operation," Mr. Golhan told a news conference in Ankara.

A Foreign Ministry statement said the troops began moving out Friday, when U.N. guards first cited troop movements northward.

Turkey sent 35,000 troops inside northern Iraq March 20 and has faced intense pressure from Western countries, incuding the United States, to pull out fast.

Turkish newspapers reported that the withdrawal would be done gradually. Some news reports suggested that it could take more than two months.

Even as the withdrawal was announced, Turkey poured in more supplies.

Seveoty trucks Saturday brought in food and ammunition for army units in Darkarjan and for two tank units near Batufa, a U.N. guard, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Saturday's announcement precedes a visit to Ankara by the U.S. deputy secretary of state, Strobe Talbott, on Monday. Also, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller meets with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House on April 19.

Defence Minister Golhan said there were rumours that PKK rebels were in U.N.

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TURKS IN IRAQ: A Turkish soldier looks at a Turkish helicopter hover above the area as they search bases of Kurd separatist rebels in northern Iraq on Saturday. A military spokesman said Saturday that Turkey had withdrawn some of its 35,000 troops involved in a huge operation against Kurdish separatist rebels in northern Iraq (See page one) (AFP photo)

Assad, Ross study ideas on peace talks

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad speot six hours with U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross on Saturday, discussing ideas to push forward Syria's faltering peace talks with Israel.

The two men met at tbe presidential palace in the Mediterranean city of Latakia.

Presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh told Reuters Mr. Ross conveyed a message to Mr. Assad from U.S. President Bill Clinton.

"Talks during the meeting dealt with the Middle East peace process. Views were exchanged on ideas which might contribute in pushing forward tbe peace process in the region," he said.

He said Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa, Mouafak Al Allaf, chief of the Syrian negotiating team, and Walid Al Muallem, Syria's ambassador to the United States, attended tbe meeting.

Diplomats said the presence of Mr. Allaf could be an indication Syria's official bilateral peace talks with Israel, suspended since February 1994, might resume soon.

Syria does oot consider talks between Mr. Muallem and his Israeli counterpart Itamar Rabinovicb, which restarted last month, as an official resumption of negotiations.

Diplomats said Mr. Assad and Mr. Ross reviewed the latest round of talks between Mr. Muallem and Mr. Rabinovich, and the possibility of expanding the negotiations to bring together military officials.

Despite Israeli and U.S. optimism over the outcome of the talks, Syrian officials said there was no breakthrough.

They said Israel did not show any change in its position regarding full withdrawal from the Golan Heights and on security arrangements.

Syria wants Israel to pull its forces back to border directly before the 1967 war.

But Israel says it will not reveal the extent of pullout from the Golan before Damascus agrees to establish full normal ties with the Jewish state.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said on Friday he was asking Mr. Ross to raise with Syria the alleged presence there of Kurdish guerrillas fighting the Turkish government.

He told reporters the United States was concerned over reports the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which Washington considers a terrorist group, has a presence in Damascus.

Mr. Ross, the State Department's Middle East coordinator, flew in from Israel.

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Rabin: Settlements will stay for now

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin moved Saturday to defuse a row sparked when a minister called for the isolated settlement of Netzarim in the autonomous Gaza Strip to be dismantled.

Mr. Rabin declared that no settlement would be dismantled before negotiations with the Palestinians on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, due to take place by May 1996.

A government statement said: "Mr. Rabin has recently studied various plans for the evacuation of the settlement but refuses, at this stage, to discuss its dismantling because of recent attaeks in this area."

Netzarim in the south of the Gaza Strip is home to only 30 families, but they are protected by several hundred troops who have been attacked by Palestinian hardliners in recent months.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said Friday that "Netzarim is an Israeli island lost in a Palestinian sea.

"It has no justification and it should be dismantled immediately."

The minister, a member of the left-wing Meretz party, said the government army soon decide Netzarim's fate.

Israel Radio reported Saturday that most ministers and deputies of Mr. Rabin's Labour Party favour the dismantling of the settlement.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has described Netzarim as a thorn in the side of Israeli tax-payers who shell out $10 million a year for tbe settlers' security.

Labour Party deputy Haggai Merom went further by urging Mr. Rabin to draw up a plan to dismantle all 19 settlements in the Gaza Strip and move their 4,000 inhabitants elsewhere.

A growing number of army reservists who served in the Gaza Strip have questioned their role there.

"Several units of soldiers are mobilised round tbe clock to protect 30 isolated families," one officer told Israeli radio.

Netzarim was set up in 1972 by former Premier Golda Meir's Labour government, which cited "security reasons" for its creation.

The main right-wing opposition Likud Party bas demanded an emergency debate on the issue. Leading member Ariel Sharon, former defence minister, visited Netzarim on Friday as a show of solidarity and vowed that "settlers will stay here for eternity."

Mr. Sharon said tbat Likud would settle half a million Jews in the West Bank and Gaza Strip once it wins power in the 1996 general elections.

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PNA reports child guerrillas detained

GAZA (Ageneies) — Palestinian police have arrested boys as young as 10-years-old who were trained by hardline groups to attaek Israel, a Palestinian National Authority (PNA) official said Saturday.

Tayeh Abdul Rahim, general secretary of the PNA, also said mosques in Gaza would be monitored to ensure congregations were not incited against the authority.

Speaking after the authority's weekly meeting, Mr. Abdul Rahim said children as young as 10-years-old had been arrested. He did not say bow many were detained or to which group they belonged.

"Those who trained them declared them martyrs by placing the boys in graves and praying over tbeir bodies before sending them to carry out attacks," he said.

Suicide bombings by Hamas and other militant groups opposed to tbe 1993 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace deal have killed dozens of Israelis since last year.

Israel says it will not move to the next stages of the deal until Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat curbs the attackers.

Palestinians said on Saturday police arrested Ahmad Bahar, a leader of the Hamas wbo is a preacher, after he gave a sermon critical of the authority on Friday.

Two preachers were among six Hamas supporters detained by Palestinian police on Wednesday.

Mr. Abdul Rahim said: "The authority also decided to monitor mosques ... since mosques are holy houses for all Muslims and not political forums. No political leaflets or wall posters will be allowed to be issued in mosques."

He said while the authority had not been "too firm" against individuals acquiring firearms thus far, it would act vigorously against anyone illegally dealing with explosives.

Mr. Arafat was angered by an explosion at what his officials called a Hamas "bomb factory" on April 2 in a crowded Gaza city residential neighbourhood.

The blast, which Palestinian officials called accidental, killed seven people, including a top Hamas guerrilla.

Sheikh Bahar launched an attack on the PNA on Friday in the wake of the explosion.

The blast, which Hamas blamed on a plot between Israel and the PNA, killed two Hamas militants including military leader Kamal Kheil.

Sheikh Bahar said in a sermon to thousands of worshippers at Gaza's Palestine Mosque: "The authority was very happy that Kamal was killed because he was wanted by the Israelis.

"The collaborators rejoiced at the hero's death and took away his body," he added, in a reference to the quick burial of blast victims by Palestinian police to avoid trouble.

"The Palestinian Authority's hostility to Palestinians is a disgrace. Those who speak the truth are thrown into jail."

Meanwbile, a wounded Hamas guerrilla thought to be a key witness to the mysterious explosion has gooe missing, the PNA said Friday.

Nidal Dababesh, 20, a member of Hamas's military wing who survived Sunday's explosion in Gaza City disappeared a few bours after he was taken to hospital with light injuries.

The PNA said an investigation showed that tbe blast was caused by Hamas guerrillas' mishandling of explosives. It accused Hamas of irresponsibility by storing explosives in a residential area.

But Hamas insisted that Israeli agents plotted the death of the most wanted person in tbe Gaza Strip, using information obtained

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Hizbollah, Israelis battle in S. Lebanon

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (Agencies) — Lebanon accused Israel of trying to keep it a captive of unrest after Hizbollah guerrillas and Israeli forces battled io South Lebanon on Saturday, killing two people.

Fighting on the last active Arab-Israeli warfront flared in the morning when Hizbollah militants rocketed a patrol of the pro-Israeli South Lebanon Army (SLA) at the edge of Israel's self-styled "security zone," killing a militiaman.

Security sources said Hizbollah fighters also unleashed a barrage of heavy artillery shells on eight SLA posts across a wide stretch of the border zone, wounding two men.

In reprisal, Israeli and SLA gunners opened up with heavy artillery fire on nine villages north of the zone, killing a 55-year-old villager, the sources added.

In Beirut, Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri said:

"Israel does not want for Beirut to revive ... and it wants all of Lebanon to remain a captive to loss and unrest."

"Israel's insistence on not implementing international resolutions stipulating that it withdraw from Soutb Lebanon and the western Bekaa, may be part of a long programme aiming to keep Lebanon locked in despair," he said in a speech as the fighting raged in the south.

Mr. Hariri, a billionaire businessman, is spearheading efforts to rebuild Lebanon from the ruins of its 1975-90 civil war and devastation of Israeli incursions.

Peace talks between Lebanon and Israel which started in 1991 are stalled over the question of an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The Beirut government says it cannot disarm the guerrillas before Israel pulls out.

The security sources said Hizbollah's Sagger missile strike against the SLA patrol, near Shoumariyeb on the edge of the border zone, destroyed an M-113 armoured personnel carrier.

They said two SLA men were wounded when guerrilla artillery shells hit their outpost at Shoumariyeh.

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Guerrillas in Iraq defy Turkish army

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF NORTHERN IRAQ (R) — A band of Kurdish rebels battling Turkey's 19-day-old drive into northern Iraq say they would not lay down their arms until freedom is won.

Defying Turkish warnings to "surrender or die," these rebels from the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) insist they know the mountainous battleground and the ways of guerrilla warfare better than their foes.

Launched on March 20, the cross-border drive by 35,000 Turkish troops targeted an estimated 2,500 Kurdish separatist rebels who use Iraq as a springboard to stage attacks on southeast Turkey.

"Turkey can never beat us this way. We are too experienced and we know this region much better than they do," a 17-year-old guerrilla who joined the PKK two years ago said on Tuesday. "Our situation is still very good."

Turkey has called the drive a success. The military says it has wiped out more than 300 rebels, destroyed vast numbers of camps and seized weapons. The rebels are starving, soldiers say.

But the band of PKK rebels, favouring baggy grey-green wool fatigues and orange sneakers, insist they are as resolute as ever. They spoke last week on condition their location remain secret.

"We were prepared for this operation months before troops actually crossed the border," said a 25-year-old guerrilla, carrying a walkie-talkie wrapped up in the red, green and yellow colours of the PKK flag.

"I assure you we have enough food and we know how to fight. We don't have camps. We are guerrillas and we change our positions like guerrillas," said the man, a battered Kalashnikov rifle slung over his shoulder and two grenades strapped to his waist.

Kurdish rebels have been using northern Iraq since before the 1991 Gulf war as a training ground and launching pad for attacks on Turkey.

They claim to have more than 15,000 guerrillas, mostly in Turkey, and some 300,000 unarmed activists in the cities. Turkey brands the PKK a terrorist group.

The PKK long demanded an independent Kurdistan in the southeast of Turkey. But over the past few years its Syrian-based leader — a Marxist — has spoken of a possible federation and demanded negotiations with Turkey.

Kurdish activists in Turkey say the desires of the Kurds who make up about 15 per cent of Turkey's 60 million people cannot be known until Turkey lifts all restrictions essentially making it a crime to discuss Kurdish desires for autonomy for independence.

More than 100 writers, professors and others are in jail, mainly for writing or saying something about the Kurds. Last December eight Kurdish members of parliament were sentenced to up to 15 years in prison for separatism, largely on the basis of statements they had made.

Some political analysts say the PKK's strength has been boosted by restrictions on freedom of expression and allegations of human rights abuses by Turkish troops.

Amnesty International issued a report accusing Turkish forces of forcibly evacuating villages, murdering Kurdish activists and torturing detainees.

"This is a political issue and if Turkey wants to, there are political parties they can talk with. There are human rights groups. They can meet with them. But we will not put down our guns until there is a political solution," said a rebel.

"We are not against the Turkish people, we are against the Turkish regime that oppresses all people," he said.

"Some say a war is bloody — it is, but it creates freedom."

A Turkish soldier walks past bodies of killed alleged Kurd separatist rebels in northern Iraq (AFP photo)

Mideastern refugees leave train for Latvia detention

OLAINE, Latvia (R) — More than 100 cold and weary Middle Eastern refugees ended two weeks of incarceration on trains around the Baltic and Russian borders on Friday when cash-strapped Latvia moved them into a makeshift hostel.

Police said Riga was doing its best to treat the group properly but many of the 105, nearly half of whom are children, said they lacked medical attention and warmth.

"Many of us are suffering badly. They have fevers and cannot get a doctor or medicine," one Afghan man, who did not wish to be named, told Reuters. "We are all very cold here."

After spending 16 days on trains, the first week being shunted to and fro between the borders of Latvia, Lithuania and Russia, the group arrived at the town of Olaine early on Friday.

They are in an open prison 25 kilometres south of Riga and occupy a single room in one of a group of low, crumbling buildings used until recently as a drug rehabilitation centre.

The long room resembling a hospital ward has rows of beds and a single locked and guarded steel door.

Several adults were lying wrapped in blankets on old metal beds while others spoke earnestly to reporters of their plight.

About 90 of the group were from Iraq, they said.

Most of them had paid organised smugglers to take them to Western countries, such as Sweden, where they could seek asylum.

Children held up hand-scrawled pleas for the cameras saying: "Western country save us please," "Where are you U.N.?" and "Saddam Hussein is in Latvia not in Iraq."

A few electric heaters provided their only warmth and in the rest of the building, including another similar room.

Immigration police chief Aivars Kurpnieks, in charge of the operation to deal with the unwanted people, told reporters on an official visit that the group had not been arrested.

"They are not under arrest. Only the organisers of smuggling should be in prison," he said.

But he added that, as Latvia had not signed the 1951 convention on refugees, Riga considered the Olaine accommodation as a detention centre not as a refugee camp.

Latvia now intends to go through the people's circumstanees case by case together with Russian officials.

U.S. reviewing Iraqi resettlement programme

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The United States is reviewing its programme for resettling Iraqi refugees in the United States. State Department acting spokesman Christine Shelly said the review was prompted by questions raised by Raymond Mabus, Jr., the U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

The Christian Science Monitor newspaper published in full April 7 a cable from Mabus to the State Department voicing his concern over the refugee resettlement programme. He called for the outright suspension of the programme.

"We certainly take the views and the recommendations of our ambassador to Saudi Arabia under consideration," Ms. Shelly told an April 7 news briefing. "We have initiated a review of the Iraqi resettlement programme from Saudi Arabia. We have sent appropriate officials to Riyadh to look into the questions and issues which have been raised by the ambassador," she said.

Ms. Shelly said there have been reports from resettlement agencies of incidents concerning some of the Iraqi refugees, a few of which have resulted in criminal charges.

"We do take these reports very seriously," the acting spokesman said. While she was unable to provide a specific number, Ms. Shelly said the "share of the total" number of Iraqi refugees involved in criminal activity is "a very small percentage. But naturally even a small percentage can attract a great deal of attention," she acknowledged.

"There are reports of their having committed sexual and other offences after arriving in the United States," Ms. Shelly said. "We're talking about crimes that they've committed since coming to the United States." The ambassador's cable mentioned instances of the sexual abuse of children and rape.

Mr. Mabus also criticised the cultural orientation programme provided by Iraqi refugees in Saudi Arabia before they are resettled in the U.S.

"One of the reasons that there is a cultural orientation programme is specifically to make it very clear to the refugees before they arrive in the United States what the U.S. standards are of appropriate behaviour as well as what is acceptable and/or subject to criminal penalty under U.S. law," the acting spokesman explained. "The U.S. conducts the cultural orientation programmes for the refugees in a number of posts around the world. We do believe it's very valuable preparation for both the refugees coming to the U.S. and for the communities in which they will live."

Since 1992 the U.S. has participated in a multinational refugee resettlement programme coordinated by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for Iraqi refugees in Saudi Arabia who fled Iraq in the wake of failed uprisings there at the end of the Gulf war.

Since 1992 the U.S. has resettled 6,500 Iraqi refugees from Saudi Arabia, 1,600 of whom were former soldiers and their family members. All were referred to the United States programme by the UNHCR. The other 4,900 were civilians, primarily Shi'ites who participated in the uprising against Saddam Hussein in southern Iraq at the end of the Gulf war.

Other countries, including Iran, Australia, Canada, Syria and the Nordic countries, have also resettled Iraqis from Saudi Arabia.

By the end of this year, UNHCR estimates, they will have resettled approximately 9,000 Iraqis from Saudi Arabia, Ms. Shelly said.

"The refugees are mostly civilians who participated in the 1991 uprisings against the Saddam Hussein regime as well as former Iraqi soldiers who deserted their units prior to the invasion of Kuwait," the acting spokesman said. "All are regarded by the UNHCR as refugees in need of resettlement."

Officers of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) interview each refugee applicant individually and assess both the credibility of their claim to a well-founded fear of persecution and whether they are eligible under U.S. law for resettlement in the United States, Ms. Shelly said. Anyone who has committed a serious, non-political crime is excludable under U.S. law.

Iraqis are a designated nationality for consideration for refugee status as a result of consultations with Congress, she noted.

Donors pledged only $1.6b to PNA — group

By Mohammad Mashariqa

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The actual figure of pledges by donor countries to the Palestine National Authority (PNA) is only $1.6 billion, not $2.4 billion as has been reported, an Israeli thinktank has said.

The Israeli Centre for the follow-up on the peace process also says figures pledged were higher than those budgeted by the donor countries.

The centre says that the real amounts pledged by donor countries was $720 million in the first year.

According to the report, an Israeli official specialised in assistance to the PNA attributes the difference in figures to the fact that most of the donor countries have budgeted the figures for current expenditures or have repeated pledges twice.

For example, a centre report says, the European countries have pledged to offer $600 million over a five-year period, but real calculations done in 1994 of these amounts show that the real budgeted amounts for the PNA were only $400 million.

The report says the problems facing the flow of assistance to PNA have to do with the performance of the PNA and its main economic body, the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR).

The report says the PNA faces serious problems in collecting taxes and customs duties to cover the increasing expenditures. Revenues do not exceed 20 per cent of the gross expenditures, it says.

The report also deals with monitoring procedures taken by Yasser Arafat, including appointing representatives of the donor countries to oversee the work of the PNA in economic fields and to monitor international assistants.

The report concludes that the PNA's economic situation is very difficult and that in case it continues this way, it have to face harsh political and social consequences.

"The Palestinian Authority is facing difficult problems in several fields, and the first problem is that most of the pledged assistance have not been honoured and those received by the authority were not spent on the specified fields, namely the field of building the infrastructure and were used to cover current expenditures," the report said.

It said the second problem was that the PNA was facing complicated problems in collecting taxes.

The tax collection process in Gaza and the West Bank faces fierce opposition in view of the low levels of income. In the West Bank the authority established a department to collect taxes.

The executive power relies in collecting these taxes on moral grounds or patriotism.

The report said it does not expect any tangible improvement in the economic situation in the near future, and said the PNA will have to fully rely on foreign assistance to cover its expenditures and develop its infrastructure.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Fishermen to be released from Moroccan custody

SEOUL (AP) — Twenty-four Chinese and South Korean fishermen detained in Morocco will be released Sunday, foreign ministry officials said. The crewmen were seized by the Moroccan maritime police Feb. 22 when their trawler, "Atlantic No. 5," allegedly violated territorial waters near the Morocco-Mauritania border. The South Korean skipper of the boat, Lee Won-Ho, 41, was killed in a shooting by a Moroccan patrol boat. His body was returned home March 18. Morocco agreed to the release of the boat's eight South Korean and 16 Chinese crewmen after the South Korean owner of the boat agreed to pay a $1.2 million fine, ministry officials said Saturday. Morocco accused the boat of illegally fishing in its waters and trying to flee when ordered to stop. But the crewmen reportedly claimed they were drifting due to engine trouble when their boat was fired on.

Iran discusses trade links with ex-Soviets

TEHRAN (AFP) — Foreign ministers from Iran, Armenia and Turkmenistan met here Saturday to discuss ways of improving regional economic cooperation between their countries. A second meeting between foreign and transport ministers from Iran, Turkmenistan and Ukraine was due to discuss strengthening trade links between their countries later in the day, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said. "Iran extends its hand to all the neighbouring countries, and notably to members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), who want to develop regional economic cooperation," he said. Mr. Velayati said one of the main topics the ministers would discuss was how Iran might help Turkmenistan sell natural gas to Armenia and Ukraine. "As Armenia and Ukraine cannot pay for Turkmenistan's gas, they want to carry out development projects in Iran or Turkmenistan in exchange, or sell their products to Turkmenistan," he said, with Iran acting as a go-between. The presidents of Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia decided last month to pursue closer economic ties at a meeting during the opening of a railway

Woman found in cave believed to be British

NICOSIA (R) — A semi-conscious, middle-aged woman found in a cave in a remote coastal area of Cyprus two days ago is believed to be British, police said on Saturday. Police said she must have stayed in the cave for at least two weeks. "A policeman has identified her. We believe she is British, divorced and a resident of Cyprus who had taught at a Nicosia college in the past and lived at Lania village near (coastal) Limassol," police told Reuters. The woman, aged 45-50, was found in a cave in the rugged Akamas area, near the popular coastal town of Paphos. She was dehydrated and in a semi-conscious state. Police said she was wearing a track-suit with a green dress on top. She had candles all around the cave. "We have contacted the British high commission (embassy) and the welfare department. She refuses to communicate with anyone, has no passport or anything else to identify herself and is now in the psychiatric ward of Limassol's hospital," police said.

Gunmen kill mayor in eastern Turkey

TUNCELI, Turkey (R) — Gunmen shot dead a town mayor in the eastern Turkish province of Tunceli, scene of a military offensive to hunt separatist Kurdish rebels, security sources said on Saturday. Kemal Tekin, mayor of Nazimiye town since 1987, was killed by the unidentified gunmen at his house on Friday night. Security forces sealed off the town. Nazimiye lies in the area where the Turkish military is engaged in a large-scale offensive against rebels of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

10 opposition leaders arrested in Yemen

ADEN (AFP) — Yemeni authorities have arrested 10 leaders of the opposition Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) in the southern province of Abyan, the YSP newspaper Al Thawra said. The group included Mohammad Awad Said, YSP secretary in the provincial capital Zinjibar, and journalists Fadel Ali Mubarak and Hussein Mohammad Nasser, the paper said. It gave no reasons for the arrests Tuesday in Abyan, 56 kilometres northeast of the southern port city of Aden. The Aden-based YSP was ousted from Yemen's ruling coalition after the May-July 1994 civil war, when its leaders failed in thier bid to create a separate state in the south. Al Thawra recalled that eight YSP members were arrested on March 29 after riots in Aden over price hikes during which three protestors were shot dead. They were later released. The YSP and seven other opposition parties had urged people to protest a government austerity drive, including a doubling of petrol prices, aimed at reviving the debt-ridden economy.

Court cuts piece off young Somali woman's lip

MOGADISHU (AFP) — An official of the Islamic Sharia court in north Mogadishu cut a piece out of a young woman's lower lip with a razor-blade Friday in a tit-for-tat punishment.

Doctors refused to carry out the sentence against 25-year-old Raho Omar Mohammad, who had bitten a piece out of the lower lip of 27-year-old Zeinab Abukar Ali after the two young women, both unmarried, got into a fight over a personal dispute.

The court first thought of allowing Ms. Ali to take her revenge by biting a piece out of Ms. Mohammad's lip, but "we were afraid she might bite more than the amount corresponding to the missing portion of her own lip," the court's deputy chairman, Abdi Ali Alasow, told reporters Saturday.

The three judges also turned down the idea of using scissors, because they too might have removed too large a portion of the lip.

An official marked the exact portion of lip to be excised with a marker-pen.

"Miss Raho showed excitement when her lip was cut, and ululated," said one of the judges. "We can show you the videotape if you want."

Several Sharia courts have sprung up over the past year in Somalia, which has been without a government since the overthrow of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in January 1991 and is subject to sporadic clan fighting and general lawlessness.

In Bosasso, a northeastern coastal city, a newly established Sharia court has just executed two men for the murder of a local businessman, and in inland Baidoa two young men found guilty of stealing cassette players and spare parts for cars each had a hand amputated.

In the south Mogadishu neighbourhood of Medina, gunmen attacked Sharia court in an unsuccessful bid to free well-known street fighter Sudi Goryan, known as Sudi the Parasite. Two people died in the attack, one of them a four-year-old boy, and one person was wounded, court officials said.

Sudi the Parasite was arrested by Italian U.N. troops for banditry, and held in jail for a year, but was released after the U.N. troops left Somalia early last month after an inconclusive two-year mission.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 ..... Animated Classic
15:00 Feature film: "The Spirit Chaser"
16:30 ..... Tarazan
17:00 ..... Le Prince La Sirene
17:30 ..... Envoye Special
19:00 ..... News In French
19:15 ..... Ushuaia
19:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
20:00 ... Masterpieces of Literature
20:30 ..... Almost Home
21:10 The Other Side of Paradise
22:00 ..... News in English
22:20 Mini Series: "Strauss Dynasty"
23:59 ..... Feature film

PRAYER TIMES

05:51 ..... Fajr
07:11 ..... *(Sunrise) Duha*
13:37 ..... Dhuhr
17:12 ..... 'Asr
20:04 ..... Maghrib
21:24 ..... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swelfieh, Tel. 811741
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637441.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel.675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The Kingdom will be affected by a depression, thus temperatures will drop with clouds appearing at different altitudes. Rainfall is also expected and winds northerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly active and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman	12/17
Aqaba	17 / 26
Deserts	8 / 20
Jordan Valley	5 / 24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 26, Aqaba 32 Humidity readings: Amman 19 per cent, Aqaba 17 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Khaldoun Ashour	699441
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul	898140
Dr. Fakher Bilbeisi	663412
Dr. Jum'a Aha Ohiyah	758848
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Nairouzh pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qana	(—)
Alquds pharmacy	(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Randa Shahin	(—)
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	617111
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896300
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	1101230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs	623111
Ahdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	6801101
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	184-532201
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	184-532201

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Mahajreen	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111/26
Army, Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/50
Amal Hospital	674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)905060
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990901
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	865199

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital	(02)247101

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:35 ..... Bangkok (RJ)
09:35 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
10:00 ..... Damascus (RJ)
10:05 ..... Larnaca (RJ)
10:15 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
10:55 ..... Ouhai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:15 ..... Beirut (RJ)
11:15 ..... Doha, Bahrain, (RJ)
18:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:20 ..... Paris (RJ)
18:55 ..... London (RJ)
19:00 ..... Brussels, Geneva (RJ)
19:00 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:40 ..... Athens (RJ)
20:50 ..... Vienna (add) (RJ)
21:00 ..... Vienna (RJ)
21:45 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)
21:50 ..... Rome (RJ)
22:30 ..... Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
23:30 ..... Paris (add) (RJ)
02:55 ..... Cairo (RJ)
03:15 ..... Aqaba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:30 ..... Sanaa (IY)
13:40 ..... Bahrain (GF)
14:30 ..... Moscow (SU)
15:15 ..... Rome, Damascus (AZ)
21:05 ..... Cairo (MS)
21:20 ..... Beirut (ME)
23:20 ..... Istanbul (TK)
23:30 ..... Athens (OA)
01:10 ..... Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:00 ..... Madrid (RJ)
07:25 ..... Beirut (RJ)
08:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
09:30 ..... Aqaba, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:55 ..... Vienna (RJ)
12:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:20 ..... Vienna (RJ)
12:30 ..... Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:30 ..... Vienna (add) (RJ)
12:30 ..... Paris (add) (RJ)
12:45 ..... Rome (RJ)
12:50 ..... Athens (RJ)
20:15 ..... Madrid (RJ)
21:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 ..... Damascus (RJ)
22:00 ..... New Delhi (RJ)
22:25 ..... Abu Dhabi, Ouhai (RJ)
23:00 ..... Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
23:45 ..... Sanaa (RJ)
23:59 ..... Dhahrain (RJ)
01:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:30 ..... Rome (AZ)
13:30 ..... Sanaa (IY)
14:30 ..... Doha (GF)
15:05 ..... Moscow (SU)
22:00 ..... Cairo (MS)
02:35 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
04:00 ..... Athens (OA)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman	8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/ 500
Banana	680
Banana (Mukammar)	620
Cabbage	120 / 60
Carrot	180/100
Cauliflower	240/ 120
Cucumbers (large)	120 / 80
Cucumbers (small)	220 / 160
Eggplant	220/ 160
Garlic	1200/800
Green beans	240 / 150
Lemon	470 / 350
Marrow (large)	100 / 60
Marrow (small)	200 / 120
Onion (green)	280/ 180
Onion (dry)	240/ 150
Orange	500/400
Peas	580/ 400
Pepper (hot)	480 / 240
Pepper (sweet)	300 / 200
Potato	300/ 200
Spinach	200/ 100
String Beans	340 / 200
Tomato	320/160

Queen visits Ottawa hospital; discusses need for palliative care unit in Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Friday visited a hospital in Ottawa, Canada which offers palliative care for terminally ill patients, a Royal Court statement said.

Queen Noor, accompanied by Minister of Health Aref Batayneh, reviewed the hospital's special services, which are scarce in Jordan, the statement said.

The Queen, who has been concerned by the challenges which Jordan faces to provide a high quality of life for terminally ill patients, discussed the urgent need to establish a palliative care unit in Jordan particularly for the poor and the helpless.

She was also interested in medical services for the elderly such as the hospital's Help Line community service office, that continuously monitors 800 elderly people living in the community.

The elderly wear a device attached to the wrist, which they can press to summon help; simultaneously, the patient's medical profile is projected on the hospital's computer screen, thus facilitating the emergency team's work.

Queen Noor concluded her visit by chatting with the elderly patients living in the hospital's nursing home.

Accompanying Qneen Noor to the hospital were Mrs. LeBlanc, the wife of the governor General of Canada and Mrs. Haya Majali, wife of Jordan's ambassador to Canada Nasouh Majali.

Mrs. LeBlanc hosted a lunch in bonour of Queen Noor at Rideau Hall, the governor general's residence. Mrs. LeBlanc welcomed the Queen describing her as a "role model for women in different parts of the world."

Queen Noor expressed her appreciation of Canada's moral and political support of Jordan especially during times of crisis.

Sbe empbasised the challenges and the opportunities that face Jordan during the peaee-building era in the Middle East and expressed her hope that Jordan and Canada will work together to promote peace, understanding and a better quality of life for all in the region.

Attending luncb with Queen Noor were Mrs. Jean Chretien, the wife of the prime minister of Canada, Mrs. Arlene Rae, the wife of the premier of Ontario, Mrs. Majali, and Mrs. Blanchard, the wife of the ambassador of the United States to Canada, the statement said.

After the luncheon, Queen Noor met with Mrs. Huguette Labelle, the president of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to discuss ways to expand its cooperation with the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) into the fields of education and a wider network of integrated development projects in the country, according to the statement.

The Queen emphasised the importance of CIDA's financial support of 500 new ambulances for the Ministry of Health and of the natural gas project that provides 16% of Jordan's energy needs, saying that such assistance "helps to relieve pressures on the population, which have increased over the past years."

Later Friday afternoon, Queen Noor accompanied His Majesty King Hussein to the Roundtable on Canadian Business in a New Middle East, the statement said.

Officials reject reports of plans to cut customs duties on U.S.- made cars

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Officials on Saturday rejected as baseless reports that the government was planning to reduce customs duties on American-made cars and that Washington had promised to send 50,000 cars to Jordan in return for the reduction.

"Someone is dreaming," was the icy comment of an official.

"There is no such plan; nor is there any agreement witb the U.S. that Jordan will levy customs duties on U.S-made cars on the basis of the cost of the vehicle rather than the engine size," added the official, who preferred anonymity.

"There is no reduction in customs duties for any vehicles or any make being planned now," said the official.

Some reports in the weekly press since early this year suggested that "another reduction" in customs duties was in the offing. The reports continued to surface despite formal denials by officials.

Some of the tabloid press speculated that the customs duties were about to be cut down by more than 50 per cent.

The official and otbers said it was not secret that tbe U.S. had been pressing Jordan to reassess its customs structure on automobiles and would like the Kingdom to calculate customs duties on the basis of the cost of the vehicles since most American-made cars have higher engine size when compared to their Japanese counterparts.

The officials, who did not want to be identified, noted that the government introduced an across-the-board reduction on customs duties last year but did not change the approach of assessing the duties on engine sizes.

Tbe U.S. commerce secretary, Ron Brown, welcomed the reduction, but said it would like to see Jordan changing tbe customs structure itself so that American automobiles would be in a better position to compete. But the government has been resisting such a move.

"Whoever is suggesting that Jordan, or any government for that matter, could agree to reduce customs duties only on vehicles made in a particular country cannot be serious," said another official.

The official noted that giving such "preferential treatment" to automobile imports from a particular country would have serious repercussions on the country's trade relations with others.

"It is simply a non-starter, and there is no agreement in principle or otherwise along these lioes," said the official. "If Jordan introduces reductions in customs duties it would be uniform and would not single out the product of one country while discriminating against another."

Meanwhile, the officials also described as nonsense reports in the press that the U.S. had promised to give Jordan 50,000 Ford cars in return for the preferential reduction in customs duties. The reports also suggested that the cars could be sold to civil servants, with payment spread over 10 years.

One report suggested that the first consignment of the cars were due at Aqaba soon.

"It cannot but be a joke," commented one of the officials.

Amman to host meeting on economic summit

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The committee in charge of organising the Amman economic summit in October is convening a meeting on Monday in Amman, and it will be attended by an Israeli delegation including representatives of the public and private sectors.

The meeting will discuss regional development projects as well Jordanian national projects with possible financing from foreign sources as part of a series of gatherings being held ahead of the Amman summit, officials said.

Omayya Touqan, director-general of the Amman Financial Market, serves as rapporteur of the committee in charge of organising the Amman summit.

Monday's meeting will be the first such discussion in Amman involving Israeli businessmen who have been holding on-and-off meetings with Jordanian counterparts on possibilities of cooperation and joint ventures.

The Israeli delegation will be headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin and will inelude the chief executives of several large Israeli businesses for what officials described as a close orientation on the business possibilities available in Jordan.

Several Israeli trade delegations visited Jordan after the signing of the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty on Oct. 26. But definite business links await the signing of a trade agreement, expected next month.

It was not immediately known whether Monday's meetings would be attended by non-Jordanian and non-Israeli participants. Details of Mr. Beilin's schedule were also not available.

A series of multilateral meetings Jordan hosted last week are seen complementary to the preparations for the Amman summit since many of the projects being discussed are common to several forums of discussions.

The Jordanian-Israeli-American trilateral commission met at the experts level here, and officials said the meeting, attended by American businessmen, identified several "fast-track" projects from among the proposals made in a comprehensive development plan for the Jordan Rift Valley prepared by the three parties.

Details were not immediately available, but officials said that the "fast-track" projects were identified on the basis of a minimum degree of feasibility studies and preparations.

The proposed projects are expected to be closely examined in another workshop to be held in Amman this month, and clear ideas on financing and technical aspects are expeeted to emerge from this workshop.

Qusai Qteishat, head of the Jordanian delegation to the trilateral meeting, said American businessmen had proposed what he said were non-conventional means to raise financing.

Jordan also hosted a one-day meeting of a task force entrusted with advancing the proposal to establish a regional development bank for the Middle East and North Africa.

Despite lingering differences, it is expected that the establishment of the bank would be announced at the Amman summit.

Jordanian, Israeli, Egyptian and American delegates also met in Aqaba last week to discuss regional economic cooperation.

Durid Mahasneb, who led the Jordanian side to the meeting, said one of the projects expected to materialise out of tbe discussions was a fish farm at Aqaba without harming the coral reefs there.

'Badia development project works to raise area's living standards'

AMMAN (Petra) — Sharifa Zein Bint Nasser said the Jordanian Badia (desert) Development Project (JBDP) aims towards a sustainable development process in desert areas and raising the living standards of their inhabitants.

Sharifa Zein, who is the director of the project's finance and public relations sector, said the JBDP is working to achieve that end by preserving natural resources through suitable administrative systems and launching investment projects.

In addition, Sharifa Zein said the project, launched by the Higher Council of Science and Technology (HCST) in 1993 in cooperation witb the British Royal Geographic Society, also aims to transfer modern technology to these areas to meet the requirements of the development process in various fields and to offer training to the residents of the area.

Briefing a group of journalists on the project, carried out upon directives by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, she said the project covers an area of 11,000 square kilometres of the northeastern desert, which stands for 15.4 per cent of the Kingdom's total area.

She said this area lies in the Mafraq and Zarqa governorates and includes 35 villages and population groupings, totalling 15,000 inhabitants.

She noted that developing this area would inevitably lead to improving the living standards of its inhabitants and would have positive results on the environment in Jordan and the neighbouring countries.

This is why developing the area is considered a top priority in Jordan, she explained.

Director of the project's research section Mohammad Shahbar said the project covers several fields of study and that research includes the following main branches: humanitarian, agricultural and biological.

He said the project deals with the Jordanian badia as one integral environmental unit, noting that teams representing universities, government departments, research centres, higher studies students from Jordan and other countries carry out the programme's field work.

Efforts continue to stem fallout after university students' brawl

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Efforts were still continuing yesterday to contain the fallout from the brawl that took place at the University of Jordan Wednesday, in which 20 students were injured.

The government, along with parties from both sides, the Circassian and Salt communities to whom most of the students involved in the clash belong, were discussing ways and means to solve the problem, informed sonrces said.

"A final solution might not be reached until the prime minister returns to the Kingdom on Tuesday," one of the sources told the Jordan Times Saturday.

"Reconciliation efforts were made during the weekend and yesterday, but a reconciliation between the two communities might wait for the prime minister on Thursday," the source explained.

A meeting was held between representatives from the two communities Thursday, under the aegis of the interior minister, but the results of that meeting were rejected by the Saltis as being "unfair."

During the Thursday meeting, a committee representing both parties was formed to meet witb the university administration on Saturday and discuss the problem.

That, however, did not happen, but another panel that would investigate the reason for the brawl was expected to be formed and start work soon.

"The students and their families in Salt rejected the outcome of Thursday's meeting and were demanding a fair trial for students who started the fight and otbers who participated from outside the university," an informed source from Salt told the Jordan Times, adding that "we believe in the university's justice and the capability of punishing students who participated in the fight."

In the meantime, two students remained in critical condition Saturday at the University of Jordan Hospital following the fight that took five hours to quell. The brawl involved more than 100 students most of whom were of Circassian origin and from Salt.

Clubs, sticks, tables, chairs and switchblades were used in the brawl. Attempts by approximately 40 campus security personnel to end the fight failed.

The dramatic clashes were sparked apparently wben Circassian students beat up a lone student from Salt who was suspected of harassing a Circassian female student.

Two days later a group of students from Salt headed to the main square of the university where Circassian students usually gather, and the brawl started.

After a short period, the Circassian students apparently with outside help respooded by heading to the Faculty of Finance and Commerce and took over the building and caused a riot.

Although the continuous fighting halted classes on Wednesday, and riot police rounded the campus from the outside and prevented students from entering tbe university premises, classes resumed as usual on Saturday under tight security.

Campus security were checking for students identification cards and at least six police vans were parked near the main gate while police in civilian clothes closely monitored the situation from inside. Campus security was also on full alert.

In the meantime, a university official told the Jordan Times that the university will take appropriate measures against the students who caused the fight.

"All I can say is that the university will implement the proper procedures and there is nothing else to add," tbe official said.

The official however would not explain the type of measures that would be taken or wben such steps would occur.

According to hospital sources, all but two of the casualties left the hospital in tbe past few days; the remaining two students are in the intensive care unit (ICU).

Two youths drown on field trip to Aqaba

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two students of the Mafraq Secondary School for Industrial Training Friday were killed in a swimming accident in Aqaba gulf, according to police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

The reports said that the two victims identified as Nawaf M., 19, and Ghassan M., 18, were on a school trip to Aqaba.

The teacher in charge of the group told police that he saw people trying to rescue someone from the water and when the bodies were pulled out he discovered that they were those of two of his students.

The victims were pulled from the sea by CDD rescue teams and were taken to Princess Haya Hospital in Aqaba.

Also on Friday in the Jordan Valley near Karak, a huge fire engulfed the offices of the Arab Potash Company, causing extensive damage but no injuries, police and CDD reports said.

According to the police report, preliminary investigations indicated that an electric failure might have caused the blaze.

The fire destroyed 20 newly built offices and most of their contents including furniture, computers and electronic equipment, the reports said.

Police and CDD reports estimated the losses from the fire to be more than JD250,000.

Also on Friday, eight people were injured in a bus accident on the Military College highway, CDD reports said.

The report said that the accident occurred when the bus driver, not identified in the report, lost control of his vehicle and it rolled over.

All victims were rushed to Al Zeitoun Hospital suffering from fractures and bruises and were listed in fair to good condition.

In Karak a 28-year-old shepherd Friday was listed in fair condition after being shot in the chest by his father, police reports said.

According to the report, the victim, Mohammad Salim, started arguing with his 70-year-old father then drove off in his father's tractor intending to ditch it in a nearby valley.

The father told police that he shot his son with a rifle to stop him.

The police report said that the tractor stopped at the edge of the hill.

Police apprehended the father and said they were investigating the incident.

In the Jordan Valley, also on Friday, police apprehended a 26-year-old man who allegedly struck a youth wbile driving through Khreimeh town then fled the scene.

According to police reports, the suspect, Ibrahim A.R., was intoxicated when he was arrested shortly after the hit-and-run incident.

Traffic officials said the driver was driving while intoxicated.

The victim, Abdul Kader Ali, 16 was listed in fair condition, the reports said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PSD chief heads for U.S. for medical tests

AMMAN (Petra) — Director of the Public Security Department (PSD) Lieutenant General Abdul Rahim Al Udwan Saturday left for the United States to undergo medical tests. Lt. Gen. Udwan was seen off by Major General Sharif Fawwaz Ben Zaben Ben Abdullah, senior officers and PSD officers.

Palestinian youth team to arrive today

AMMAN (Petra) — A Palestinian youth team, beaded by Azmi Shouebi, head of the sports sector in the Palestinian National Authority, is expected to arrive today to sign a protocol agreement with Jordan to enhance sports exchange. The protocol calls for exchanging sports teams and youngsters' delegations as well as exchanging expertise in the youth and sports sectors. The Ministry of Youth prepared a programme for the Palestinian delegation that includes special visits to the sports facilities in the Kingdom.

A Czech quartet to play at RCC

AMMAN (J.T.) — Classical music, Czech-style, will add a cosmopolitan flavour to Amman's cultural life with a performance Monday evening by the Czech Republic's Wihan Quartet at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC). Regarded as leading interpreters of chamber music in the Czech Republic, the Wihan Quartet will present works by composers of the romantic era, including Smetana, Dvorak and Suk.

Khamasini conditions expected — officials

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Meteorology has forecast relatively hot, dry and dusty weather for today as a result of the Khamasini conditions typical in Jordan at this time of year.

The department expected the maximum weather in Amman on Sunday to be 28°C.

It said the Khamasini conditions were expected to end on Monday afternoon because of a cold air front that will affect the country.

Therefore, it said, a drop in temperatures will start as of Monday, and clouds were expected to appear at various altitudes, with scattered rains.

Environmentalists, ministry hold water use workshop

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Environment Society (JES) and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation started a week-long workshop on water use and conservation.

Society Vice President Mohammad Masalhah said the future of the entire region depends primarily-upon the manner in which water is used and the techniques applied to economise it.

Mr. Masalhah stressed the importance of scientific studies in raising public awareness of the various uses of water outside Amman. He also called for the incorporation of water usage and water conservation in school textbooks.

Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Water Ahmad Hadid pointed to Jordan's scarce water resources. He said that while the amount of water used for different household and industrial purposes reached an annual average of 800 million cubic metres, the annual needs of the different sectors far surpasses this amount.

In addition, demand on water is increasing every year, and development requirements necessitate additional amounts of water.

Mr. Masalhah said that while new resources can be found, intensive efforts should be exerted to conserve water at all levels.

The workshop will be followed by field work in six different areas of the Kingdom for the coming five months.

Also a campaign will be launched for a whole year to raise awareness of ways of economising and using water.

WHAT'S GOING ON

SECOND ARAB DRAMA FESTIVAL

- ☆ Two plays entitled "Life for Death" and "The Theatre of Sivastople" respectively at 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.

FILM

- ☆ Film entitled "Godzilla 1985" at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

CONCERT

- ☆ Concert by Wiham Quantet (including pieces by Suk, Smetana, and Dvorak) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Monday at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- ☆ A collection of photos of Middle East doors by Julia Reinholt at the Gallery, off the main lobby, Inter.Continental Hotel.
- ☆ Exhibition of art by Moroccan artist Farid Belkhahia at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.
- ☆ Exhibition of Palestinian embroidery at Goethe-institut.
- ☆ Exhibition of art by Yassim Atiyeh and Yassin Al Muhammadawi at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ☆ Ceramics exhibition by artist Samer Al Khaffaji at Umm Utheina Gallery.
- ☆ Exhibition of art by William Golding at the British Council.
- ☆ Exhibition of Egyptian products at Amman International Exhibition, Marj Al Hamam (Tel. 688141).
- ☆ Exhibiton of copper sculptures by Iraqi artist Mohammad Hussein Judi at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
- ☆ Exhibition of graphic works by Rafiq Lahham at Darat Al Funun. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.
- ☆ Exhibition of art by Leo Rialp at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre).
- ☆ Exhibition of prize-winning paintings by Czech students at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ☆ Exhibition of oil paintings by Hamoud Chantout at the Balqa' Art Gallery, Fuheis.

'Health benefits extended to more families'

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary General of the Ministry of Social Development Suleiman Rousan said the ministry was extending exemptions to families with monthly incomes of less than JD 200 for treatment at government hospitals, the University of Jordan Hospital and King Hussein Medical Centre.

Mr. Rousan said a special department at the ministry is entrusted with conducting studies on individuals and families who could not afford medical treatment in order to offet them the proper exemptions.

He said exemptions provided by the ministry fall into two categories. The first, he said, involves the government's provision of treatment expenses at the University of Jordan Hospital and King Hussein Medical Centre in accordance with instructions issued by the Council of Ministers to exempt families receiving less than JD 100 a month from all medical treatment expenses.

He said families with a monthly income of more than JD 100 receive partial exemptions. He explained that families whose monthly income ranges between JD 100 and JD 150 are exempted from 75 per cent of medical treatment expenses, and families receiving a monthly income of JD 150-JD 200 are entitled to a 50 per cent discount.

Mr. Rousan said families receiving a monthly income of more than JD 200 are not entitled to these exemptions.

Philippine Muslim gunmen have foreign links — Ramos

IPIL, Philippines (R) — President Fidel Ramos Saturday linked foreign extremist groups to Muslim fundamentalists who massacred 53 people in a raid on this southern Philippines town.

"We see a definite connection between the Abu Sayyaf (and) international terrorist groups," he told a news conference after touring the fire-ravaged commercial centre of Ipil town, which was attacked by a 200-man rebel band Tuesday.

Gen. Ramos flew to Mindanao Saturday, walked past the ruins of Ipil and doled out relief cheques as he ordered the military to "go get those terrorists."

As he toured Ipil, fighting between government forces and rebels of the Abu Sayyaf group erupted for the third day running in a mountainous town about 50 kilometres away from Ipil.

The military has been investigating the links between the Abu Sayyaf and extremist movements all over the world.

"It is validated by the fact that Ramzi Yousef visited Basilan twice," Police General Job Mayo said in a television interview in Manila.

Basilan is a southern island province known as a lair of the Abu Sayyaf, blamed for a wave of killings and kidnappings in Mindano the past two years.

Yousef is facing trial in the United States as the alleged mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing, which killed six people and injured about 1,000.

Local police said Yousef belonged to the same group as six Muslim fundamentalists arrested in Manila last week for illegal possession of guns and explosives.

At least 53 were killed and 67 injured in the attack on Ipil, Zamboanga Del Sur province, 780 kilometres south of Manila, in the most serious violence for 20 years in the country's Muslim insurgency.

The military have said they killed 17 rebels in pursuit operations around Ipil after remnants of the 200-man band fled, grabbing civilians as human shields along the way. Five hostages were killed in the crossfire.

A military officer told journalists he believed nine more guerrillas were killed in fresh fighting in a mountain village Saturday.

Gen. Ramos announced aid for Ipil and other communities in Zamboanga Del Sur affected by fighting.

He gave out 46 million pesos ($1.8 million) to be used to rebuild the town and create new jobs for some 50,000 people affected by fighting.

Some of the thousands who welcomed him remained fearful. "We are afraid they will come back again. There are rumours that they will be coming back," said housewife Fe Santuyo.

One group held placards as Mr. Ramos passed. "If you cannot protect us, arm us. If you cannot arm us, pray for us," one read. "We wish to live. Ramos save us from hell," said another.

General Rene Cardones, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, said no reports of casualties from the early-morning clash were immediately available as military communications were difficult.

It was the fourth firefight since the major rebel raid on Ipil.

Saturday's battle occurred at 5:00 a.m. local time (2100 GMT) in Candis village in Slocon municipality, 45 kilometres west of Ipil.

"The attack of Ipil in Zamboanga Del Sur by Abu Sayyaf terrorists is a deadly example of the new kind of mindless criminal violence that we must face," Mr. Ramos told graduates of the Philippine National Police Academy near Manila.

Gen. Cardones said the rebels continued to use villagers as "human shields" and guides, making it difficult for the 2,000 pursuing troops to distinguish the enemy from the hostages.

Government militiamen carry the body of their comrade who was killed in a gunbattle with Muslim rebels outside the southern Philippine town of Ipil. Government troops are in pursuit of a rebel band which pillaged Ipil during a raid, killing 50 people, looting homes and banks and burning the town centre to the ground (AFP photo)

Helms calls Bhutto leader of India

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Republican Jesse Helms, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, introduced visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto as the leader of India. Sen. Helms, a conservative from North Carolina who has been an outspoken critic of U.S. foreign aid, made the gaff when Ms. Bhutto was visiting the Senate floor. "The Foreign Relations Committee has had the honour of welcoming the distinguished prime minister of India, and I wish to bring her to the floor," Sen. Helms said. When a colleague informed the 73-year-old senator of his error, the senator quickly apologised. "If I said that, I've never made a more grievous error and I hope the record will be changed to show that," Sen. Helms said. Ms. Bhutto was in the middle of a 10-day tour of the United States.

Parrot's whistle lands man in jail

LONDON (AFP) — A parrot's whistle of appreciation sent unemployed Eric Buckley to jail for a year here Friday. At the hearing, held in February in Kingston, southwest London, the blabber-mouthed bird whistled when Georgina Morgans came into court. Let out of his cage, he compounded his crime by flying straight to her, and letting himself be stroked. To make matters worse, he even told enquiring police officers his name. The problem for Buckley, a 39-year-old who wanted the Amazon Green parrot for his children, was that the bird that he said was called "blue" called himself "Barney." Finding Friday that Buckley had knowingly received stolen goods — weighing in at some £625 ($975), magistrates sentenced him to 12 months in jail. Or as its known in local slang, "doing bird."

Chinese comic books to be checked for sex, demons

BEIJING (R) — Authorities in China's capital are to start censoring comic books to expunge sex, violence and demons, the Beijing Daily said Saturday. The censorship Centre of the Municipal Press and Publication Department said comic books and other books for children must be censored for these things by it before circulation, the newspaper said. Of 87 types of comic books surveyed, the centre found 32 contained "vulgarities and obscenities" detrimental to the healthy development of youths and children. Eighty-two of them were translations of Japanese magazines, it said.

Seattle man dreams way into Guinness Book

SEATTLE (R) — Some people work for years to get into the Guinness Book of World Records, but Boeing Co. worker David Powell literally slept his way into it with the longest dream ever recorded. Powell, a patient at the Puget Sound Sleep Disorder Centre in Seattle, was recorded in the dream state characterised by rapid eye movement, or REM, for three hours eight minutes, smashing the old record of two hours 23 minutes, said Mike Jennings, director of the centre. Jennings said Powell, 38, suffers from obstructive sleep apnea, a condition in which the patient stops breathing during the night, preventing REM sleep. "He hadn't had a good REM period for the last 10 or 15 years," Jennings said. Most people enter the dream state about every 90 minutes when they sleep, usually for no longer than 15 or 30 minutes at a time. At the Sleep Disorder Centre, Powell was fitted with a mask that blows a continuous stream of air into the nasal passage, keeping the airway open and allowing the patient to fall into a deep sleep.

'Hollywood' sign to get makeover

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — The famous "HOLLYWOOD" inscription above the Hollywood Hills is getting a makeover, including a new coat of paint. Contractors are due to scrape off the old paint from the 17-metre (55-foot) high block letters starting Monday, with a new paint job expected to be completed by mid-May.

Fire kills 29 Chinese schoolchildren

BEIJING (R) — A forest fire whipped by fierce winds killed 29 primary-school children on a hilltop excursion in northern China, burning many beyond recognition, local officials said Saturday.

Distressed parents hoped to complete the horrid task of identifying the charred victims, most of them sole offspring born under China's strict one-couple, one-child family-planning policy, by the end of Saturday, a local official said by telephone.

The children died Thursday when fire broke out on Hongqing Mountain in Huairen county in Shanxi province, 270 kilometres west of Beijing, the official of the Xiaoyu Coal Mine Office said.

He said 195 children and four teachers from the Xiaoyu coal mine number 2 Primary School had gone on the spring excursion up the 100 metre hill two kilometres south east of the mine community.

The children were at the top of the hill when the fire started.

"Some comrades could see the smoke from here," he said by telephone from the mine office.

The blaze raced across the hill, whipped by strong winds and fuelled by dry bushes in an area parched by drought for months, he said.

Most of the children managed to escape, but 18 boys and 11 girls aged between nine and 14 were killed.

One boy was in critical condition and three others were slightly hurt and being treated in a local hospital, he said.

The fire died out within 30 minutes because steep cliffs around the mountain prevented it from spreading, he said.

Peru steps up security ahead of elections

LIMA (R) — Security forces fanned out across Peru to keep order and ward off Maoist guerrilla attacks ahead of Sunday's elections as authorities probed vote-tampering in a northeastern provincial city.

Some 12.4 million Peruvians will cast ballots for 14 presidential candidates in the voting but the main contenders are President Alberto Fujimori, who is running for a second term, and former United Nations chief Javier Perez De Cuellar.

A total of 2,400 candidates are vying for the 120-seat Congress. Polls show Mr. Fujimori is far ahead of Mr. Perez De Cuellar but his party is not likely to win a majority in Congress.

Thousands of Peruvians, who waited until the last minute to pick their voting identification cards, lined up at the electoral registry late Friday. Voting is mandatory.

Soldiers and police were deployed in the capital to beef up security at government buildings and protect polling centres leading up to the vote, police officials said.

Troops spread out in the provinces, especially in the Andean highlands, the coca-growing upper Huallaga Valley and along the Ecuadorean border.

Authorities say they expect Maoist rebel attacks in several areas of the country, including Lima, in a bid to disrupt the vote. One police source said 100,000 members of security forces are deployed to ensure balloting takes place without incident.

A confidential report by Peru's anti-terrorist police Dincote said members of the Shining Path met recently to plot attacks on police in Lima.

"The guerrillas said in the meeting that the week before the elections was going to be very active," said the report, obtained by Reuters.

Meanwhile, Peru's Attorney General Blanca Nelida Colan travelled to the city of Huanuco, 150 miles (240 km) northeast of Lima to investigate an incident in which 11 people were arrested as they failed out some 500 vote tallying sheets, officials said.

Police authorities found a total of 3,000 sheets, they added.

Two National Elections Board officials were also detained in connection with the crime and three others are being sought, Radio Programas Del Peru said in a report from its correspondent in Huanuco.

Mr. Colan appointed a special prosecutor for the case and then travelled to Huanuco after meeting with members of an Organisation of American States vote-observer team.

"The absence of an immediate public clarification of this episode by the competent authorities places in grave danger the openness and legitimacy" of the vote, Santiago Murray, head of the OAS mission, said earlier.

OAS chief Cesar Gaviria, who arrived early Friday to observe the vote, said there was a danger of fraud in other parts of the country and called on the government to clarify the Hnanuco incident.

Filipina maid 'unjustly hanged' by Singapore

MANILA (AFP) — Filipina maid Flor Contemplacion, hanged in Singapore last month for a double murder, was probably innocent and Singaporean authorities should re-investigate the case, a presidential commission said Saturday.

The commission, formed by President Fidel Ramos after the hanging soured ties between the two South East Asian neighbours, also accused the island-state of tolerating the use of torture to win confession.

"Contemplacion... appears to be mistakenly blamed and hanged. Apparently, she is the victim of grave injustice," said the report by the commission, headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Emilio Gancayco.

"Singapore is a police state which tolerates, if not allows, intimidation and torture in order to compel an accused individual to confess," said the commission.

"Singapore has ceased to be a caring and humane society because of its sudden affluence," it added.

Contemplacion was hanged last month for the 1991 murder of Delia Maga, another Filipina maid, and Maga's Singaporean charge, a four-year-old boy.

Many Filipinos insist she was innocent and have mounted massive protests against Singapore for alleged injustice. They have also criticised the Ramos government for failing to protect Contemplacion.

In reaction to protests, Mr. Ramos downgraded ties with Singapore and threatened to sever relations if the commission he created last month found that Contemplacion was "a victim of injustice."

In their report, the commission gave credence to the testimony of several Filipinos, including other domestics and former detainees in the Singapore prison, that Contemplacion had told them she was tortured and forced to make the confession that incriminated her.

The report also cited the testimony of a Filipino medical-legal investigator that Maga's remains show she was killed by a strong man, contrary to the conclusions of an autopsy in Singapore that she was strangled.

It recommended that the Singapore doctors who conducted the first autopsy of Maga come to this country and do another autopsy.

Ousted Simpson juror denies jury misconduct

LOS ANGELES (R) — A juror dismissed from the O.J. Simpson murder trial, whose widely reported comments caused Judge Lance Ito to order an investigation into jury misconduct, denied Friday ever saying that panellists discussed the case among themselves.

"I never said that I personally heard any of the jurors talking about the case. I have no knowledge of any jurors talking about the case," Jeanette Harris said on KCAL-TV.

The black-38-year-old employment counsellor, who was booted off the jury Wednesday, said she had contacted Judge Lance Ito's office to tell him she had been misquoted in an earlier television report.

Her denial came after the judge told attorneys he would order investigations into jury misconduct and into Ms. Harris' allegations that sheriff's deputies guarding the sequestered panel had promoted "racial problems" in the mixed-race group.

Testimony in the trial was on hold for the second straight day Friday as three jurors recovered from a bout of flue, but Judge Ito created a stir by issuing a critical evidentiary ruling.

In a written decision, Judge Ito rejected an effort by the former American football star's defence team to mount a new challenge to the admissibility of the prosecution's crucial DNA evidence.

Judge Ito denied a defence request to halt the trial and hold lengthy hearings outside the presence of the jury on a battery of test results on blood and hair samples linked to last summer's murders of Simpson's ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ron Goldman.

In early January, Simpson's attorneys had decided to forgo separate hearings on the admissibility of DNA evidence, saying they would instead challenge the scientific reliability of the test results.

DNA testing, a kind of genetic fingerprinting, is crucial to the prosecutors' case, providing what they say is a direct link between Simpson and the murder scene.

But Ms. Harris remained the focal point of the day's developments. She first surfaced only hours after her dismissal Wednesday, telling KCAL in an on-air interview that prosecutors had so far presented "a whole lot of nothing" and predicting that the trial would end with a hung jury.

KCAL reported that, following the interview, Ms. Harris told the station's reporters that jurors had discussed the case among themselves — a serious violation of the judge's orders.

But Ms. Harris said Friday her remarks to the reporters had been "misinterpreted."

She also denied saying jurors had made up their minds as to Simpson's guilt or innocence. "I never heard any jurors saying they had made their minds up," she said.

Ms. Harris said she had expressed her feeling that Simpson was innocent because it had been drummed into the jurors that the football legend was innocent until proven guilty, and the prosecution "has not presented a case to me, myself."

Ms. Harris stuck by her assertion that some sheriff's deputies were promoting racial unrest by acting in an "unprofessional manner," favouring white jurors over black. The panel is made up of eight blacks, three white and one hispanic.

Ms. Harris initially spoke to KCAL after being dismissed from the panel by Judge Ito for failing to disclose she was the victim of spousal abuse in 1988 — an allegation she flatly denied.

Mahathir slams opponents using religion

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad Saturday slammed the opposition for using religion in the country's general elections this month as local newspapers reported monks and clergy announcing their candidatures.

"Religion and politics should not mix, that is our stand," Mr. Mahathir told reporters after his National Front coalition met to finalise their candidates in the capital, Kuala Lumpur.

The Star tabloid reported Saturday that a Buddhist monk and a Christian pastor have said they intend to contest for parliamentary seats in the polls set for April 24 and 25.

A total of 192 parliamentary seats and 394 state seats in 11 of the 13 state assemblies will be contested in the polls, the country's ninth since it gained independence from Britain in 1957.

Political and economic analysts say Mr. Mahathir's coalition should get a landslide win in the coming elections against a divided opposition and with his country experiencing unprecedented prosperity.

Mr. Mahathir has been sharply critical of the opposition using religion, particularly the fundamentalist Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, known by its Malay acronym PAS.

Belgian police searched Claes' house

BRUSSELS (R) — NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes said Saturday that Belgian police had searched his private home and his official residence late Friday.

Mr. Claes, who has been linked to a defence contract corruption scandal, told a radio reporter that police had also made a note of his bank account numbers.

He was quoted as saying he gave permission for a search of his NATO residence, declining to use his diplomatic immunity because he wanted to cooperate fully with the investigation into the scandal. The NATO chief said no documents had been seized during the search.

Police also searched the house of the leader of the Belgian Flemish Socialist Party, Louis Tobback, late Friday, as well as the party headquarters and the town hall in Leuven where he is mayor.

A Socialist Party spokesman said no documents were taken from the party headquarters or the town hall but the report said documents from Mr. Tobback's personal bank account had been seized.

The scandal involves alleged bribes paid to Mr. Claes' and Mr. Tubback's Flemish socialist party over a contract awarded in 1988 to the Italian firm Agusta to supply the Belgian army with helicopters.

Mr. Claes, who was economic affairs minister at the time, was quoted as saying police had waited for him to return home in Hasselt, northeastern Belgium, late Friday before searching his house. He had been conducting an orchestra in the town of Sint Niklaas in north Belgium.

Only a few hours before the searches, Belgium's parliament voted overwhelmingly to allow the country's highest court to question Mr. Claes over the Agusta affair.

Iceland votes as polls show left ahead

REYKJAVIK (R) — Icelanders voted in a general election Saturday with the latest opinion polls showing conservative Prime Minister David Oddsson trailing a centre-left opposition despite a recent economic revival.

Polling stations opened at 0900 GMT and closed at 2200 GMT.

A heavy voter turnout was expected in calm but cloudy and cold weather towards the end of the harsh winter on this North Atlantic island famed for hot springs, volcanoes and glaciers.

A total of 192,000 of Iceland's 260,000 inhabitants were eligible to cast ballots and must choose from among six parties ranging from Conservatives and centrists to Socialists and a Women's Party. All the parties have pragmatic platforms and any coalition formula is in theory possible.

An opinion poll for Television Channel 2 showed Oddson's conservative Independence Party and its Social Democrat coalition partners, in power since 1991, two seats short of a majority in the 63-seat parliament, the Althing.

In a closing television debate Friday, Mr. Oddson said the present coalition would not necessarily continue unchanged even if it retained a majority.

The campaign has focused on the fisheries-dominated economy, the emotionally charged issue of fishing quotas, the dismantling of agricultural subsidies, the debate over whether to join the European Union and the subject of equal pay for men and women.

Clinton calls for welfare reform that is practical

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton said Saturday he and House Speaker Newt Gingrich have much in common when it comes to welfare reform, but warned that the changes must be practical as well as tough.

"My top priority is to get people off welfare and into jobs," Mr. Clinton said in his weekly radio address to the nation. "I want to replace welfare with work, so people earn a paycheck, not a welfare check."

Mr. Clinton, who was in California to address the annual convention of the State Democratic Party, praised the Friday night televised address by Mr. Gingrich on the completion of the House Republicans' "Contract With America" saying he "spoke eloquently about the need to reform the welfare system."

"The speaker and I have a lot in common," Mr. Clinton said. "We both want bold welfare reform. We both think that we need to make people leave welfare after a specific number of years."

Mr. Clinton said he and House Republican leader both want recipients to be required to perform some type of work in order to be eligible for benefits and that they both favour providing states with flexibility to shape their own programmes.

Mr. Clinton, who is trying to reassert his own role in shaping the legislation before Congress, said he has two key differences with Mr. Gingrich about overhauling the welfare system.

He said that while Republicans want to cut welfare costs in order to justify tax cuts, some of the savings should be directed to job training programmes.

"I want tough welfare reform, but we've got to be practical," Mr. Clinton said. "If we're going to make people on welfare work, we have to make it possible for them to work."

"If we're going to make people self-reliant, we have to make it possible for them to support themselves," he said. "We can be tough, but we've got to be practical."

He also complained that the Republican approach was "too tough on children" citing the cutting off of aid for children whose mothers are unmarried teenagers.

"We ought to remember that a child is a child a baby is a baby," he said. "Whether they're white, black or brown whether they're born in or out of wedlock... we simply shouldn't punish babies and children for their parents's mistakes."

Mr. Clinton called upon Mr. Gingrich and the Republican and Democratic leaders of the House and Senate to "work together to get this job done... without letting this issue divide us."

After his address to California Democrats, Mr. Clinton was slated to fly to Los Angeles to support the U.S. Education Department's programme to promote safe schools.

House Republicans have backed withdrawing the programme's $482 million funding. The Senate has acted to keep most of the funding.

The White House Saturday released a summary of a study by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention that found 105 violent, school-associated deaths in the last two years.

Of the deaths, 65 per cent of the victims were students and 11 per cent were teachers or staff. The other 23 per cent were individuals killed on school property.

On Friday, President Clinton, countering Republican celebrations of their first 100 days running Congress, urged lawmakers to avoid "ideological extremism" and work with him to find common ground to solve U.S. problems.

While sounding a conciliatory theme in his appearance before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Dallas Mr. Clinton also made clear he was prepared to veto some Republican bills if they remain unchanged. He called the $189 billion tax cut approved by the House of Representatives Wednesday "a fantasy" and said, "it's too much. It's not going to happen."

Mr. Clinton said voters demanded change both when they elected him in 1992 and when they swept Republicans into the leadership of Congress last year and it was time to search for "common ground".

"I was not elected president to pile up a stack of vetoes. I was elected president to change the direction of America," he said.

Noting that he and the Republican-dominated Congress share such goals as reforming welfare, cutting the deficit and fighting crime, Mr. Clinton declared: "We have got to stop pointing fingers at each other so we can hold hands."

"We are near many breakthroughs," he said. "The real issue is whether we will have the wisdom and the courage to see our common ground and walk on it."

"We must abandon extreme positions and work together. This is not time for ideological extremism."

Mr. Clinton made only respectful references to Mr. Gingrich, who delivered an unusual nationally televised address Friday night on the first 100 days of the new Congress — a time frame traditionally reserved for assessing a new president.

"In the next 100 days and beyond, the president has to lead the quiet, reasoned forces of both parties in both houses to shift through the rhetoric and decide what is really best for America," Mr. Clinton said.

"In making these decisions it is absolutely vital that we keep alive the spirit and the momentum of change," he said. "But the momentum must not carry us so far that we betray our legacy of compassion, decency and common sense."

Hundreds of people come to the stadium in the southern district of Nyamirambo in Kigali to pay their last respects and begin a vigil as two hundred large white wooden crates, each containing the remains of several people, and 15 individual coffins, which were put on display in the stadium, were to be buried. Rwanda held a symbolic national funeral to mark the anniversary of the beginning of last year's ethnic slaughter of hundreds of thousands (AFP photo)

Rwanda army postpones march to join mourning

KIGALI (R) — Rwanda's army postponed a military parade in the capital Kigali Saturday to join Rwandan civilians in mourning for about a million people who perished in ethnic slaughter last year.

"It is a day of mourning out here. It was decided that no military parade could be allowed during mourning. It is all quiet today," a senior officier told Reuters.

No new date for the march was immediately fixed.

The parade by Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated army, one year after it began to drive out a Hutu-led army largely blamed for the killings, would partly have been a show of force to show opponents they had no plans to relinquish their hard-won power.

On Friday, Rwanda's military chief warned hardline Hutu exile forces against trying to invade the country again.

"I can assure you we still have teeth to bite very hard," Major-General Paul Kagame told mourners attending the reburial of genocide victims on Kigali's Rebero Hill Friday.

Gen. Kagame's army took Kigali at the height of the slaughter of ethnic Tutsi and moderate Hutus, which began when the plane of Hutu Presidents Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down over the capital.

The bones of thousands were jumbled into 200 coffins buried on the anniversary of the slaughter's start, including one flower-decked cask containing the "unknown Rwandan."

Relatives wept at the mass graveside, but anger seemed to be the prevailing mood among many.

People waved placards which reflected the frustration of a nation which feels the world has talked much but failed to bring the organisers of genocide to trial.

"We don't need seminars, we need justice," said one.

The first seven out of at least 30,000 mostly Hutus languishing in cramped jails appeared in court Thursday.

Rwanda's trials could take years to complete, but they do not include some 400 ringleaders who fled the country and are the targets of an international tribunal to meet late in 1995.

The tribunal will sit in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha, where Gen. Kagame's then rebel force and Mr. Habyarimana's government signed a peace accord in 1992 that was torn apart by Mr. Habyarimana's death.

Hutu troops and militias launched the bloodbath against Tutsis after hearing Mr. Habyarimana was killed on April 6, 1994.

Gen. Kagame and his Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) guerrillas responded on April 8 by smashing out of their trenchlines in the north of the country and making a push to control Kigali.

For the next three months, the massacres were only brought to an end by relentless Tutsi guerrilla advances.

Hutu forces and their families fled into exile in Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania, since then, fears have mounted that Hutu forces are training and equipping themselves for an invasion.

Gen. Kagame noted this and called for an end to the international arms embargo against Rwanda imposed by the United Nations Security Council last year.

"This country should have full sovereignty, which includes acquiring means for its defence," the RPF chief and defence minister told the Rebero mourners.

Meanwhile Burundi's President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya Saturday visited Muyinga, the town where some 400 Hutus were massacred last week, to preach peaceful coexistence between the country's majority Hutus and minority Tutsis.

Aides said Mr. Ntibantunganya mingled with people in the northeastern town and listened to them bitterly complaining about insecurity at the hands of government soldiers.

"The president is telling the people to learn to live with each other, to try to focus on rebuilding a nation threatened by anarchy because of existing intolerance between the two ethnic peoples," a senior presidential aide told Reuters.

It was Mr. Ntibantunganya's first visit to the region since last week's massacre which heightened fears of Hutu-Tutsi slaughter on a scale similar to last year's bloodbath in Rwanda.

The U.S. ambassador in Burundi Robert Krueger Friday visited survivors of the attack in Muyinga at a hospital there and spoke of intensified government efforts to persuade people to live together in peace.

"Everywhere in the countryside, Burundi leaders are going and preaching peace. They are keen to see simmering hatred ease," Mr. Krueger told reporters.

Gunmen killed a South African television producer and two Burundians and wounded another South African journalist in an ambush northeast of Bujumbura Thursday.

Vincent Francis, who worked for Worldwide Television News (WTN), was the first foreigner killed in Burundi since three Belgians were shot and killed by Hutu guerrillas on March 19.

Murayama dismayed by Clinton atomic remark

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama Saturday expressed disappointment over U.S. President Bill Clinton's remarks justifying the atomic bombing of Japanese cities at the end of World War II, Japanese media reported.

"I would have been happy if attention had been paid to Japanese concern that there be no more Hiroshimas or Nagasakis because a weapon that killed so many civilians was used," Mr. Murayama was quoted by Kyodo News Agency.

Mr. Clinton, asked at a meeting in Dallas, Texas, of U.S. newspaper editors whether the United States should apologise to Japan for the atomic bombing and whether then President Harry Truman made the right decision: responded tersely, "no, and based on the facts he had before him, yes."

U.S. policymakers at the time said the decision to drop the atomic bombs saved lives by averting a full-scale invasion of Japan's heavily defended main islands.

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, killed more than 140,000 people, while the bombing of Nagasaki three days later, took another 70,000 lives, according to Japan's official count.

Japan police arrest top doctor of doomsday cult

TOKYO (AP) — Police Saturday arrested the top doctor of a hospital affiliated with the religious sect suspected in last month's deadly nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway system.

The most extensive Japanese criminal investigation in memory continued, with raids on a suspected gun parts factory and a chemical facility where police say the cult may have manufactured the deadly nerve gas sarin.

The gas killed 11 people and sickened about 5,500 in the March 20 subway attack, which shocked a nation once proud of its safety.

Police said they arrested Doctor Ikuo Hayashi on suspicion of illegally confining a 23-year-old woman follower of the cult, the Aum Shinri Kyo, or Supreme Truth sect.

The doctor is suspected of also beating and anesthetising the follower at the cult's Mount Fuji complex from late December 1994 until she was rescued in a March 22 police raid, said a police officer in Nanao, the town where he was arrested 330 kilometres northwest of Tokyo.

The woman was confined and drugged after she had asked to leave the cult, according to the Kyodo News Service.

Police arrested three other doctors from the Tokyo-based hospital on March 22, the first day of nationwide raids that have continued daily since.

Police have hauled away truckloads of chemical lab equipment, medical gear, gas masks, as well as tons of chemicals that appear to include the ingredients for sarin and its antidotes, and biochemical experiments.

Police pile up boxes of evidence seized from the Aum Supreme Truth sect after police raided a heliport of the sect at Kamikuisbiki village. The sect's Russian-made helicopter is seen behind (AFP photo)

But they still have not made any arrests in the subway attack or the shooting of the national police chief, gunned down March 30. He had been overseeing the cult investigation. He remains hospitalised.

The cult denies any link to the subway attack or the shooting.

Top cult officials this week have spent hours on national TV talk shows and in press conference saying the chemicals in their facilities are for manufacturing benign products such as pesticides, plastics and computer parts.

Police are using a wide variety of pretexts to raid property and arrest members of the cult. The doctor, for instance, was picked up by police on suspicion of riding a stolen bicycle, the police officer said.

The officer, who gave only his surname, Izumi, said the 48-year-old cult doctor was then handed over to the Tokyo Metropolitan Police, who then arrested him on the illegal imprisonment charge.

Police are searching for the cult's charismatic leader, Shoko Asahara, and for 30 cult leaders whom they want to question on suspicion of having prepared Sarin.

About 200 police and about 60 military nerve gas specialists Saturday continued a raid on a large cult building in Tomizawa, Yamanashi prefecture, near Mount Fuji.

News reports said they were looking for evidence to back up a former cult member's claim that the building was used to mass-produce gun components. The Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) quoted police as saying they have found computer-controlled precision machine tools and lathes at the site. They have also found parts of guns and automatic rifles, in a car owned by the cult, NHK said.

The Tomizawa facility is 25 kilometres southwest of the village of Kamikuisbiki, near Mount Fuji, 60 kilometres southwest of Tokyo, where police Saturday seized about 25 tonnes of what appear to be caustic chemicals, Kyodo said. A report in the Asahi newspaper quoted police as saying they also found more chemical residues near the site that could have been left by sarin production and storage.

Police also confiscated daily necessities and other items found in a Russian-made passenger helicopter on cult property in Fujinomiya, about 10 kilometres southwest of the Mount Fuji compound.

Russian bombers try to flush Chechens from mountains

KHARACHOI, Russia (AFP) — Russian planes Saturday bombed the mountains into which Chechen separatist fighters have withdrawn, while sporadic fighting raged around several towns Saturday morning in the breakaway republic.

From this small hamlet 70 kilometres southeast of the Chechen capital Grozny, planes could be seen flying over the mountains and heard dropping bombs on the mountain roads and forests that they had already attacked Thursday and Friday.

"They came here with eight planes," said Mussad, who fled the fighting in the town of Shali three weeks ago.

"They dropped about 20 bombs. They aimed not only for the road but also for a former holiday camp which had been converted into a refugee camp. Luckily I think most people had left. They realised it was too dangerous."

"Why don't they bomb Vedeno where the soldiers and their headquarters are?" he asked in reference to the Chechen Mountain stronghold 60 kilometres south of Grozny. "Can't they tell the difference between a camp where there are only civilians and army bases?"

But the difference between civilian and soldier is becoming more and more blurred in this guerrilla war where the fighters are often little more than armed citizens who go back home to sleep between battles.

Kharachoi is the last village on the road which climbs toward the pass marking the border between Chechenya and its eastern neighbour Dagestan. The surrounding mountains are full of Chechen separatist fighters who are trying to regroup.

"You can see them on the mountain road they control, where they search passing cars. You can see them in the forests climbing towards the relative safety of the peaks with Kalashnikovs slung over their shoulders. You see them in the backs of lorries, or simply sitting up in the hills keeping watch over the valleys below.

But although it may appear that the four-month conflict in which thousands have died is turning into a mountain war, the Chechens remained defiant that they had not given up hope of holding onto towns, or even recapturing them.

"We still hold Achkoi Martan, Samashki and Bamut (in western Chechenya) and are continuing to fight for Shali, Gudermes and even for Grozny," said a defiant Shrivani Basayev, the second-in-command at the Chechen headquarters in Vedeno.

Mr. Basayev said hundreds of reinforcements had been sent to Samashki Friday after Russian forces fired on village elders who had come to negotiate.

But his optimism seemed misplaced Saturday as Russian troops stormed the village after a night of heavy fighting, Echo Moscow radio reported.

Russian heavy guns were blasting Samashki, the nearby town of Achkoi Martan and the village of Bamut, Interfax News Agency said, quoting officials in the Republic of Ingushetia, which neighbours Chechenya.

Mr. Basayev denied Russian news agency reports that the inhabitants of Achkoi Martan had decided to han the separatist guerrillas from their town and make peace with the Russians.

"We still hold the town and are continuing to fight" for it, he said. It was impossible to confirm this.

Meanwhile Saturday, other refugees continued to stream down from mountain villages which the Russians have threatened to bomb after a new deadline expires Sunday.

Also Saturday, Russian President Boris Yeltsin was to meet top government officials at his Black Sea holiday home Saturday to discuss the situation in Chechenya, ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

The agency, citing informed sources, said Mr. Yeltsin would break his holiday to meet his defence, interior and special services ministers, among others.

IAEA: N. Korea preparing to reload reactor

SEOUL (AFP) — International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Hans Blix told South Korea Saturday that North Korea was preparing to reload a controversial reactor which was frozen under a deal with Washington, Yonhap News Agency said.

But Mr. Blix, who ended a three-day official visit here Saturday, said North Korea has not yet violated its October 1994 deal with the United States, under which it is to get two new reactors for scrapping a suspected nuclear arms programme.

Two IAEA inspectors stationed in North Korea were not being hampered from carrying out their monitoring work at the Yongbyon research reactor north of the capital Pyongyang, be added, according to the report.

Mr. Blix had checked out of his Seoul hotel by the time the report came out, and could not be reached for confirmation.

Yonhap's source was an unnamed Foreign Ministry official.

It said Mr. Blix disclosed the North's preparations to reload the five-megawatt research reactor in Yongbyon during a breakfast meeting with Foreign Minister Gong Ro-Myung before calling on President Kim Young-Sam.

The report came hours after North Korea flatly rejected a U.S. offer of two 1,000-megawatt reactors from South Korea, which is being asked to shoulder much of the costs of the package promised by Washington to Pyongyang.

North Korea Saturday flatly refused to take South Korean reactors in exchange for scrapping its nuclear programme setting the stage for tense negotiations in Berlin next week with the United States.

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam (right) greets International Atomic Energy Director-General Hans Blix with a handshake at the Presidential Blue House in Seoul (AFP)

The North's official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA), monitored in Tokyo, Saturday blasted rival South Korea for insisting that it must supply new reactors promised to Pyongyang by Washington.

KCNA called this "nonsensical" and said Seoul must not interfere in the U.S.-North Korean negotiations, which will resume Wednesday in Berlin after adjourning prematurely last month following new North Korean demands.

North Korea "has never invited South Korea to take part in the delivery" of light-water reactors (LWRs) pledged under the October 1994 U.S.-North Korean accord in Geneva, nor was Seoul given any role, KCNA said.

"What (North Korea) is obliged to do is to receive the LWRs from the United States according to the framework agreement," the official monthpiece added.

The North's rejection came after U.S. Japanese and South Korean officials meeting in New York closed ranks ahead of the Berlin meeting and insisted that South Korea must supply the reactors.

The three countries lead the international consortium formed to implement the replacement of North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons research facilities, which have been frozen under the Geneva accord.

South Korea, the presumed target of the North's nuclear programme is being asked to provide $3 billion, or three-fourths of the project's cost, and insists it must be the main contractor.

The KCNA rejected South Korean threats to withdraw from the consortium, saying "the North has nothing to mind and worry about," and noting that Pyongyang struck a deal with Washington alone.

According to South Korean officials briefed by U.S. negotiators, North Korea wanted a U.S. firm to supply the two reactors, rejecting South Korean models on safety grounds. Earlier this week, North Korea suggested Russia could supply one of the reactors.

Yonhap said Mr. Blix Friday praised South Korean nuclear technology without commenting on U.S. negotiations with Pyongyang.

Yonhap said Mr. Blix assured South Korean officials that two IAEA inspectors stationed in North Korea were not being hampered from carrying out their monitoring work at the Yongbyon centre.

Yonhap attributed its story to an unnamed Southern Foreign Ministry official.

It said Mr. Blix disclosed the North's preparations to reload the Yongbyon reactor during a breakfast meeting with Foreign Minister Gong Ro-Myung before calling on President Kim Young-Sam.

S. Africa's Zulu party pulls out of talks

ULUNDI, South Africa (AP) — The Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party decided Saturday to suspend participation in an elected chamber writing a new constitution.

The decision meant Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi would continue to serve in President Nelson Mandela's cabinet and the party would still participate in parliament.

But Inkatha would boycott meetings of the Constitutional Assembly, comprising the two chambers of parliament, which is drafting a constitution to take effect in 1999.

Mr. Buthelezi wants autonomy for regional governments and a special constitutional status for the Zulu kingdom. Mr. Mandela's African National Congress proposes a strong central government with limited powers for the provinces.

The Inkatha boycott is more symbol than substance, attempting to convince the ANC that Mr. Buthelezi would eventually pull his party out of Mr. Mandela's unity government and threaten stability in volatile Kwazulu-Natal province, the traditional Zulu homeland.

Years of fighting between the ANC and Inkatha in the province killed thousands prior to the nation's first all-race election last year. Since then, violence has greatly decreased but flares occasionally.

Sarajevo Airport closed after aid plane hit

SARAJEVO (R) — Bullets riddled a U.N. aid plane and one hit the cockpit windshield at Sarajevo Airport Saturday when the plane was attacked while landing and again while taking off.

U.N. peacekeepers, who immediately closed the airport, said the aircraft was hit by 10 small arms rounds and took to the air again without stopping to unload its relief cargo.

The U.N. did not say whether the firing came from a Serb or Muslim sector of the area around the airport on which Sarajevo relies for most of its food when Serbs seal roads into the city.

Road convoys were halted Friday when the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) blockaded French U.N. troops and their vehicles behind mines near a checkpoint on the main supply route between the airport and central Sarajevo.

General Herve Gnhilliard, the U.N.'s Sarajevo sector commander, met a BSA general at the airport on Saturday to try to get the mines removed and the traffic flowing again.

Later Saturday, the Bosnian Serb forces lifted their blockade of French U.N. peacekeepers U.N. spokeswoman Miriam Souchaki said Saturday.

The Serbs signed a promise to stop interfering with traffic on the road, where the U.N. has suffered the hijacking of vehicles, arms and ammunition in recent weeks.

Agreement to end the blockade, which began Friday, was reached between Serb and U.N. generals at Sarajevo Airport.

Ms. Souchaki said Serb forces removed mines placed around the French troops close to a Serb checkpoint, and the French withdrew three armoured vehicles and 20 men.

One U.N. armoured vehicle manned by 10 French soldiers was left at the spot to continue its mission to ensure the free movement of traffic, Ms. Souchaki said.

A first round of meetings Friday failed to budge the Serbs and U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivanko told reporters: "We haven't been very successful in getting freedom of movement in the area."

He called the BSA action, "a provocation...a definite provocation. We anticipated a number of scenarios and this is one of them."

The French were sent to the checkpoint because the Serbs used it in recent weeks to hijack vehicles, weapons and ammunition from passing U.N. forces.

The four-month ceasefire in Bosnia, not due to expire until May 1, has crumbled steadily since mid-March with a sharp rise in the number of incidents in Sarajevo and fighting between Muslims and Serbs in central and northeastern Bosnia.

Each escalation has dealt a blow to hopes that the warring sides can be persuaded to sign a renewal of the truce, now the focus of international diplomacy.

"Although the fighting is still localised, the dangers of a large-scale war engulfing Bosnia are immense," Mr. Ivanko warned.

"War has its own logic and rules and even small-scale military activity can spin out of control in a matter of days. It seems more and more the only restraining factor in the fighting is the weather."

The U.N. said a Serb missile which hit the Sarajevo Muslim suburb of Hrasnica Friday killing one person and wounding four was probably fired from a multi-barrelled rocket launcher. The blast flattened three houses.

In the U.N. protected east Bosnian Muslim enclave of Zepa, patrolling U.N. military observers were attacked by angry local people Friday after two Muslims collecting firewood were shot dead. Surrounding BSA forces were suspended of killing them.

Fighting was also reported continuing on the Majevica front in northeast Bosnia and the Mount Vlasic area north of Travnik in central Bosnia.

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Climate for all

THE CONFERENCE on climate that ended in Berlin Friday was threatened with disarray after the failure of the participating countries to agree on a final document. The bone of contention that seemed to divide the international community most was carbon dioxide emissions which Europe and the developing countries would like to see drastically controlled to save the planet from self-destruction.

The U.S. was spearheading the small number of countries which opposed any deadline or clear commitment on carhon dioxide emissions. Washington maintained that it was unahle to put its name on something that it could not do. This was honest hut not sufficient enough. The climate on Earth is increasingly threatened hy all sorts of pollutants that suffocate its atmosphere. It is one thing to aim for greater industrial development and quite another to contaminate the ecosystem on this small planet to the extent that life would become dangerously compromised.

Western Europe is right in insisting on effective deescalation of dangerous emissions from factories. The outright rejection of the call for a target date for ending the contamination of the stratosphere and the atmosphere is also an anamoly given the other crusades being championed by the U.S. such as the end of nuclear proliferation and the use of lead in fuel. There happens to be something more dear than inhuman economic and industrial development. The Berlin international meeting had heen without "passion or vision," as the participating British delegation lamented during the course of the conference. The passion that once characterised the discussions on environment seemed to all hut dissipiate into thin air simply because some had the priorities all mixed up. Now, however, with the satisfactory conclusion of the conference, we hope that those countries which stood in the way of effective climate control will have reconsidered their position and gone ahead with what the majority has decided.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily on Saturday dealt with an address His Majesty King Hussein delivered in New York on Wednesday, saying the King has stressed that the challenge facing Jordan and Israel now was building peace after making peace. The newspaper said the King voiced determination to have a solid peace between Jordan and Israel and to make it the core of the peace-making process in the Middle East. It said the international community is now required to support Jordan's determination to bolster peace in order to contribute to regional stability and security and to achieve the aspirations of all parties involved in converting official peace treaties to a peace between the peoples. Within this context, the paper added, the U.S. has a special role in view of its sponsorship of the peace process and friendly relations between the Kingdom and the U.S. dating back to the 1950s. No doubt that the American Senate's decision on Thursday to forgive Jordan of $275 million of its debts to Washington is a step in the right direction and it shows a desire not to have the White House's commitments turned into a scapegoat for internal political strife, the paper noted. It voiced hope that the Congress will continue this tendency so as to enable the American administration to fullfil all its obligations towards the peace process.

AL DUSTOUR daily dealt in its editorial with King Hussein's visit to Canada and stressed that he was keen to outline Jordan's principled stands on domestic, regional and international issues. The paper said King Hussein again stressed in his official address to the Canadian people that Jordan and its people were always against war and adventures and against the occupation of other countries' lands. It said this is why Jordan played an active role to prevent damage resulting from war and occupation and to help countries and peoples avoid their destructive repercussions. It said that is why the Jordanian people supported their leadership in its quest for peace, adding that the Jordanian achievements on the way to comprehensive peace were a source of pride for Jordanians and a source of respect and appreciation for this people by the world nations. The paper noted that King Hussein expressed clearly the peace Jordan is seeking is not the peace made between governments but the kind of peace that would utilise all the peoples capabilities to build a better future that they all deserve.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Will the Middle East development bank see the light?

THE CHANCES that a Middle East development bank (MEDB) be established are 50/50. So far no final agreement is reached.

The establishment of MEDB was always part of the ambitions of an Arab-Israeli peace. The idea was mentioned in several documents and research papers througb the years, especially the "Harvard" report. However, it was the American administration which formally undertook to promote the idea, and used its influence to draw others into participation.

Israel on the other hand showed a strong interest in the project for two reasons: First, Israel will be a major beneficiary of such a bank, and second, because the World Bank does not consider Israel a developing country. It is therefore not qualified to benefit from its financing. It is, of course, very important for Israel to find a new bank to finance peace projects, instead of leaving the job to the World Bank.

It seems that there are real obstacles facing the project, the most important of which is the negative attitude of the European Union (EU) which thinks that it is more practical to entrust the job to the World Bank, or have a special multinational group supervise financing peace projects, without having to create yet another bureaucratic organisation.

It is apparent that the Europeans are not enthusiastic about undertaking a financial role while they were intentionally excluded from the political dimension of the peace process since Madrid (1991). The peace process was conducted all the way under American auspices, and the celebrations took place in the White House Rose Gardeo or in Wadi Araba, under the patronage of the American president, and in a conspicuous absence of the Europeans.

There are also some reservations among Arab-Gulf states due to fear of being asked to shoulder a big chunk of the funds needed to finance peace. Arab Gulf states desire peace and support it. They are ready to join it but witbout having to foot the bill or a major part of it, especially at a time when they suffer deficits due to low earnings from oil exports.

The United States invited an international task force to study the project in Washington D.C., with the participation of the European Union, Japan, Gulf states, in addition to Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel. The meeting did not produce a decisive result. Six more meetings of the task force were agreed with a timetable leading to the Amman economic summit on Oct. 31. The first meeting took place in Amman recently and sbowed disagreement. The next meeting will take place soon in Cairo.

MEDB started as a big idea with $15 billion as paid up capital. Then it started to shrink. The going figure now is $5 billion to be covered by tbe U.S., the EU, the World Bank, Gulf states and the direct parties to peace.

The target for the task force is to come up with a comprehensive project to be presented to the economic summit in Amman for blessings and possible contributions to its capital.

In view of the many reservations already expressed, it is more likely that a middle road may be found, whereby either the bank will be established but with a smaller paid up capital or, a special group will be formed to supervise the regional and common projects, in which case the experts of the World Bank may bave the upper hand in all technical matters.

The bank, if it sees the light at all, will be run on commercial basis with a special fund for grants to be voluntarily financed by donors when and if they choose to contribute financially to the peace in the Middle East.

MEDB is still an idea whose fate is hanging in the air. It is premature to predict the final outcome. We bave to wait and see.

Turkey's aim, a moving target in Iraq

By Suna Erdem
Reuter

ZAKHO, Iraq — Turkey's declared aim in sending 35,000 troops into northern Iraq keeps shifting like the whereabouts of the Kurdish guerrillas they are chasing.

Going in with gusto on March 20, the troops warned 2,500 rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fighting Turkey for a separate homeland to "surrender or die."

Yet finding their foes had fled, forewarned by a long border build-up, Turkish troops have instead set about wiping out their camps and seizing the weapons they left behind.

Public pronouncements in the nearly three weeks since the start of the campaign give rise to the question: Did the Turks ever point their military might at a clear goal?

"The operation does not aim to destroy people," Deputy Prime Minister Hikmet Cetin said on Thursday, 18 days into the drive.

"The terrorist group had training camps, logistic support in northern Iraq which posed a threat to Turkey," he said.

The mission certainly has a political motive.

It may well boost Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's popularity in the short term, helping her to sell a sceptical public on democratic reforms, such as more rights for Kurds, which might otherwise be perceived as surrender to the PKK.

Still, Ankara's long-term aim of finishing off the PKK seems as distant as ever.

The bulk of the guerrillas have moved farther inland, south of the troops' 40-kilometre limit, or slipped across the border to Iran, Syria or even back to Turkey, the very place the troops were meant to prevent attacks.

While some soldiers battle small guerrilla groups in the northern Iraqi mountains, many more troops appear to be sitting around in tanks wondering when they will go home.

Then too, the PKK has cells worldwide. PKK Chief Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan is believed based in Syria or Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

Turkey's image in the world meanwhile has been hurt. Britain, France and Germany, worried about villagers in the way of the troops, demand a swift end to the drive.

Germany froze military aid to Turkey, and the European Parliament recommends other states follow Germany's example.

The United States demanded a target date for a pull-out.

Now that it's in, Turkey may have trouble finding its way out.

"It is becoming clear that there is no exit strategy," said a Western diplomat who declined to be identified.

"There is a sense that they can win the war but must win the peace as well, which they have not done yet," he said.

Some Turkish politicians believe the operation was launched to "alert the world" to the problems caused Turkey by the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq.

Whatever the ultimate aim, the push has yet to close what Turkey calls an "authority gap" in the lawless area.

Iraqi Kurds have jointly governed the region, set up under Western protection after the 1991 Gulf war, since polls in 1992. But their rule is often marred by infighting.

This week Ankara sent a foreign ministry delegation to meet an Iraqi Kurdish leader and invited him for a rare visit to the Turkish capital, possibly to discuss securing the region after Turkey withdraws.

Many doubt, however, whether the Iraqi Kurds will cooperate with the Turks to successfully police the porous border and clamp down on the PKK guerrillas based there.

"Military sources have told me that unless the mountainous area on the other side of the border is held by us (Turks), the PKK will begin to use it as a pass again soon," said Ismail Cem, a Social Democrat politician in the coalition government.

Asia skips peace dividend for military buildup

By Edith M. Lederer
The Associated Press

LONDON — There is no peace dividend in Asia.

The end of the cold war has led to defence cuts in much of the world, but the continent with the fastest-growing economies has become the fastest-growing area for military spending.

If economic growth is sustained, Asia's three great powers — China, Japan and India — will have "substantially greater" military capabilities and more lethal weapons by the year 2010, according to a new report for the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) previewed Tuesday in Jane's Intelligence Review.

China, in particular, will have formidable military might and is the country most likely to shift the balance of power in the region, said the report by Paul Dibb, former deputy secretary of Australia's Joint Intelligence Organisation.

"Asia is the new market for arms," said Damon Bristow, an Asian security expert at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies. "The Asians say it's because they have more money. I would say it's because the conditions are conducive for an arms race."

In the past, American and Russian military presence kept a lid on territorial disputes in Asia, a region more geographically dispersed and culturally diverse than Europe.

Now that the Russian and U.S. militaries are cutting back, Asian countries are able to aggressively assert their claims to contested territory such as the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

There is a power vacuum in Asia and no security organisation like NATO to fill it, said Gerald Segal of the IISS, who also directs Britain's Asia Pacific Programme.

The United States and Russia are unlikely to become embroiled in regional issues — a belief reinforced recently when the United States did not defend the Philippines in its dispute with China over the Spratlys, Mr. Segal said.

"So people look around for powers that are likely to fill that vacuum and the obvious candidate is the country that constitutes 75 per cent of East Asia's territory and population — China," he said.

"The concern that everybody has is, how are you going to best protect your security in this new environment?"

Mr. Bristow said the distrust among Asian nations and the absence of any regionwide security structures have helped fuel the spending spree on high-technology defence systems.

But it isn't only the big Asian powers that are spending more.

Between 1985 and 1992, while NATO's total defence spending decreased, South Korea's increased by 63 per cent, Singapore's by 36 per cent and Malaysia's by 31 per cent, Mr. Segal said. Vietnam was the only East Asian country whose defence spending was down — by 24 per cent.

"In the terms of the rate of growth of both arms acquisitions and defence spending, the Middle East has clearly taken second place to East Asia," he said.

According to Mr. Dihh's report, the most important change by 2010 will he that Asian nations will have more accurate, more lethal and more reliahle weapons systems thanks to technology readily supplied hy European, North American and Russian suppliers.

China will have "a much more capable strategic nuclear force" in 15 years which can target all of Asia, western Russia and the east coast of the United States, he said. While Western countries reduce their nuclear arsenals, China is the only country known to have tested nuclear weapons since 1992.

It will probably have an aircraft carrier force capable of extended operations, which will be a significant factor in Asia — but not outside the region, he said.

With money from its rapid economic growth, he said, China should also be able to import and produce more high-technology military items and modernise its fighter aircraft and rapid reaction force.

India is also likely to develop its nuclear capabilities, fielding a few intercontinental ballistic missiles to deter China and some intermediate-range ballisric missiles targeted at Pakistan, said Mr. Dibb, now head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University.

If there is no war with Pakistan, India will use its resources to modernise its aging air force and navy — and will probably revive its aspiration to have aircraft carriers if China acquires them, he said.

Japan, which has the economic strength and technological ability to produce almost any weapon, is unlikely to develop a nuclear force by 2010 "but it probably will have consciously reduced the research and development lead-times for such a capability," Mr. Dibb said.

In 15 years, it will have Asia's quietest and most advanced submarines, the most advanced U.S. fighters and the technology to very rapidly expand its military capabilities.

Have big powers achieved anything in ex-Yugoslavia?

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

LONDON — A year ago, five major powers formed the Contact Group to pool their diplomatic efforts in bringing peace to former Yugoslavia.

With the latest of many ceasefires in tatters as Europe's worst conflict since World War II enters its fourth year, the United States, Russia, France, Germany and Britain have little to cheer. But has the group achieved anything since last April?

The member states say it has brought pressure to bear on the warring parties, curbed Belgrade's ambitions to build a Serb empire, reduced tensions in Croatia and put a stop to damaging rows between the United States, European allies and Russia.

However, some diplomats and analysts say it has done no more than paper over disagreements and underline the collective failure of European and Western governments to defend principles they claim to support.

"These countries are trying to make it look as if they are doing something and they have lost the chance to make their peace plan work," Tilmann Chladek of the German Foreign Policy Association in Bonn told Reuters.

"The peace plan is as dead as a dodo," said Jonathan Eyal of the Royal United Services Institute in London.

"The Contact Group still has a credibility problem but at least it has prevented surprises and disagreements between the United States and Europeans and between Russia and the West."

The five countries decided to pool their efforts a series of major rows over Bosnia and the use of NATO air power, as well as pressure in the United States to lift an arms embargo and do more to help the Muslim-led government.

"One has to remember where we were in judging the contact group," said one diplomat from a European member. "It never produced a magic solution but it has kept the show on the road."

What the group did produce was a peace plan to divide Bosnia roughly in half between the Serbs and the Muslim-Croat alliance.

The Bosnian Serbs, holding 70 per cent of Bosnia, rejected the plan because it would mean giving up conquered territory.

The major powers offered the plan on a "take-it-or-leave-it" basis last July, with a clear threat that action of some kind could be taken against any party rejecting it.

The Serbs remained defiant and, with the United Nations deeply reluctant to use NATO air power, no action was taken.

By the end of last year, the Contact Group — which meets regularly at official level in the capitals of member states — decided the peace plan should be only a "basis for negotiation."

In the meantime, it had managed to get Serbia to cut off supplies to its rebel kin in Bosnia in an attempt to bring further pressure to bear, although with little apparent impact.

The Contact Group members, who hold four of the five key seats on the U.N. permanent Security Council, have also managed to convince Croatia that peacekeepers should be allowed to stay.

But now they seem to be reaching the end of the road.

A four-month ceasefire brokered last December — not by the group but by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter — is due to run out at the end of this month. The group is concentrating its efforts in two areas that offer little hope of progress.

The first is to convince the Bosnian government to extend the ceasefire and stop its new offensives.

The second is to get an unwilling Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to recognise Bosnia and Croatia, thus further isolating rebel Serbs and strengthening the Sarajevo government.

The group is prepared to offer Serbia relief from U.N. sanctions in exchange for this but disagreed at their latest meeting in London on Tuesday over how exactly it should be done.

"The Europeans and the Russians are essentially prepared to live with anything that stops the fighting, while Washington has always seen things differently," said Mr. Eyal.

"That is what lies at the heart of the differences. And given that no one was prepared for major military intervention, it was inevitable that the group's aims would be modest."

LETTERS

Only democratic Arabs can build strong league

To the Editor:

THE ANSWER to Faris Glubb's article "What futureis for the Arab League?" (Jordan Times, April 4), lies in the fact that the Arab League did not come into being with a view to have a future. It was so designed that it will always have a dismal present to remind us of its sanctimonious past.

Ever since its inception, 50 years ago, the Arab League was meant to be a misnomer.

The Arab League is not a league of Arab nations or Arab peoples. Its a forum of systems of Arab governments in league with one another bent on perpetuating their raison d'etre: For better or worse, even if this necessitates the demise of other members.

One or two of its 22 members could qualify to be popularly representative of their own people.

Granted that the Arab League has had an impact on institutionalising the Arab boycott of Israel — hardly an achievement of any magnitude when compared with its lamentable performance in preventing it's members from becoming hulagus of destruction, namely in Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Chad, Kuwait, Yemen, Sudan, Mauritania.

Only, and only when the Arab peoples come to exercise their inalienable democratic rights that the Arab League could claim to have a de jure status of immense clout to bring about peace and prosperity among its members and neighbours.

Ludwig W. Tamari,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Jordan, Canada to boost ties

(Continued from page 1)

During his meeting with Canadian businessmen, the King said Jordan's efforts will hopefully be a solid building block in the structure of comprehensive peace in the region.

During the roundtable, also attended by Canadian Foreign Minister Andre Ouellet, the King outlined Jordan's consistent efforts for peace in the region, and the suffering it had to endure as a result.

The King said the challenge now was to make people feel the benefits of peace and take part in it.

Planning Minister Rima Khalaf outlined to the businessmen the investment climate in Jordan and the opportunities and incentives the Kingdom offers to investors.

At the outset of the meeting, Mr. Ouellet welcomed Their Majesties the King and Queen and lauded the King's efforts in the peace process.

"We know that the peace treaty is only a beginning. Real peace go beyond agreements. It takes roots and flourisb when people decide to build economic and commercial bridges, to harness energies previously devoted to destruction, to build a future of inter-dependence, confidence.

"Canadians can contribute to that future. Our country was founded on our ability to work togetber despite our enormous diversity, linguistic ... in all the challenges we face from our geograpby. Indeed our differences turned to be our most precious advantage.

"Your Majesty, your audience today is a gathering of our most entrepreneurs from across Canada, inclnding many from the Arab and Jewish communities. They are all determined to contribute to the prosperity of your region. Many of them participated in the first economic summit meeting in Casablanca and I am sure tbey are looking forward to the second meeting in Amman."

PNA says children detained

(Continued from page 1)

from a receotly detained activist. Hamas accused the Palestinian secret service of collusion with the Jewish state.

Hamas, in a statemeot issued on Thursday, said witnesses had seen a man they believe to be an Israeli agent in disguise deliver a suitcase moments before the explosion.

Both the PLO and Hamas believe that Dababesh was the key witness who can explain what caused the explosion.

"The secret of wbat happened is with Dababesh," said nne Hamas activist.

But his whereabouts are now unknown and disputed.

Dababesh's family insist their son was taken to hospital by an ambulance immediately after the blast. Dababesh's father, Jihad, said he saw bis son at Shifa hospital and learned that he was suffering from burns in the abdomen and bruises in the face.

The father went to fetch his wife. But upon returning, Nidal was missing and a nurse said Palestinian secret police io plain clothes bad taken bim away.

Palestinian officials, who initially said Dababesh was at the hospital, later said that he had disappeared without a trace. A senior Palestinian official who refused to be named said Hamas kidnapped Dababesh to avoid him revealing embarrassing secrets.

Turks report Iraq pullout

(Continued from page 1)

camp, which houses refugees from Turkey as well as Iraq, but added there was "no concrete proof."

"We will go into the Atrush camp if it turns out that it is sheltering the rebels, which bas been denied by the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)," he said.

Mr. Golhan stressed Turkey's wish to work with Iraqi Kurds against the PKK in northern Iraq.

"We will do as we have said several times: we will evacuate the region when our troops bave finished destroying all separatist elements. Then we will work witb Iraqi Kurd groups," he said.

The United States urged Turkey to keep its word on limiting its operation in northern Iraq.

Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for European affairs, said: "The Turkish government has said publicly that the operation will be limited in duration and we consider that an extremely important statement and we take the Turkish government on its word on that."

Iraq denies accepting plan

(Continued from page 12)

Argentina, the United States, Britain and Oman, whicb would permit Iraq to sell $2 billioo worth of oil over 180 days to obtain foreign currency to buy urgently needed humanitarian supplies.

"I don't want to go into details... I have strong reservations and rejections to this draft and I made my position clear to its author, His Excellency the Argentine ambassador," and would do so when he met other sponsors, he said.

Mr. Aziz declined to comment on any other topic.

The council president, speaking earlier with reporters about his meeting with Mr. Aziz said: "I don't mean to say that the Iraqi authorities are ready to accept the resolution once it is passed.

"But I certainly do get the very clear sense that if certain reservations that Iraq has about the text as it is drafted now are resolved, then Iraq wonld be prepared to go ahead with it."

Mr. Kovanda added: "Whilst they don't accept something that hasn't been agreed upon, neither are they rejecting out of hand the text that the council is working on at present."

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright gave credence on Friday to documents unearthed by a London newspaper that alleged Iraq was purusing a clandestine nuclear programme.

Speaking to the American Society for International Law, Ms. Albright said the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would report on the documents obtained by tbe Sunday Times of London, perhaps as early as Monday.

"The London Sunday Times is in possession of documents that appear to be genuine and indicate Iraq is purusing a nuclear weapons programme," Ms. Albright said. She gave no further details.

The newspaper said a defecting Iraqi nuclear scientist had vanished in Greece while trying to reveal details of a secret nuclear weapons programme Iraq was hiding from IAEA inspectors. The paper said he had faxed them two sample pages of documents and a summary of their contents, which suggested Iraq was baek at work on nuclear weapons, forbidden under U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The IAEA previously reported that it had destroyed Iraq's nuclear materials after the end of the 1991 Gulf war. But the agency, which did discover the programme for years, is often in a weak position to defend its findings.

Rabin tries to defuse row

(Continued from page 1)

Meanwhile the Palestinian Authority has refused to get involved in the row. Self-rule officials Hisham Razek said Saturday that "the dismantling of Netzarim is not a goodwill gesture to the Palestinians but a move which serves Israel's security interests."

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Saturday attacked Israel's settlement policy, particularly targetting a proposal announced this week to expand settlements in the occupied West Bank.

"They are trying to make demographic changes on the ground to face us with new facts which we cannot accept," Mr. Arafat told reporters as he left the weekly meeting of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

"It's a clear breach of what we had agreed upon."

A Rwandan mother gives her child a drink nf water at a refugee camp (AFP photo)

Unheeded went the screams

KIGALI (AFP) — The screams went unheeded. The presence of U.N. troops had no effect.

The third great genocide of the century — after Turkey's pogroms against Armenians in 1915 and Hitler's against Jews and gypsies — was commited against the Tutsis of Rwanda a year ago under the unblinking gaze of the international community.

Today the same community is trying to prevent a repetition of the genocide in Burundi, Rwanda's Siamese twin, a neighbour with the same ethnic mix.

In January of 1993, after three years of sporadic fighting, an international commission of inquiry published an alarming report, concluding that Hutus were carrying out "acts of genocide" against Tutsis and that both the Hutu-dominated army and the Tutsis' Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) had commited war crimes.

The winds of multi-party politics blowing through Africa nevertheless sloughed through Rwanda that year, with opposition politicians operating openly and becoming members of a coalition government in July.

The minority Tutsis had been chased from power and in many cases forced to flee the tiny central African nation over the previous 30 years.

Peace accords were signed in August in Arusha, Tanzania, between President Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, and the RPF, which had its power base in neighbouring Uganda.

In October of 1993, the United Nations set up the U.N. Assistance Mission In Rwanda (UNAMIR) to oversee the accords. It included 2,500 troops, but its mandate and means were limited.

The United Nations at the time was fighting in the Somali quagmire, and ruled out another operation in which U.N. troops would be authorised to do battle.

But it soon became apparent that the Arusha accords had mainly convinced foreign leaders. They put pressure on the president to make dramatic concessions to the Tutsi rebels, wbo were invited to take part in "a government of transition with a broadened base."

In power since 1973, the president dismissed the accords as "a scrap of paper" in a bid to reassure his followers, reluctant to give up their power.

But the RPF had launched its first offensive back in October 1990, and hatred between the Hutus, who made up 85 per cent of the population, and Tutsis, at 14 per cent, was ignited, with extremist Hutus considering opposition Hutus as accomplices of the RPF.

Rwandan groups announced massacres against Tutsis, the formation of militias, and spread of firearms. Their leaders said they bad tried to alert foreign governments, particularly that of France, which was actively supporting the Habyarimana regime.

But France, whose soldiers had left when the U.N. toops arrived, did nothing.

UNAMIR voiced concern — but that was all — at the start of 1994 about the arming of civilians and saw no chance of the peace accords taking hold.

The storm broke on April 6, when a plane carrying Mr. Habyarimana and Burundian President Cyprian Ntaryamira was shot down over Kigali — killing them both — by as yet unidentified attackers.

UNAMIR remained helpless until the end, pulling out all but 400 of its soldiers, many nf those unarmed observers, after the assassination of 10 Belgian Blue Helmets by Rwandan soldiers.

The United Nations tried to broker a ceasefire, but more than half a million Rwandans were destined to die in savage fighting and brutal massacres carried out by Hutus armed with machetes and hoes.

As the fighting erupted, foreign nations evacuated their citizens and aid agencies fled.

Rwanda was alone.

It was not unril the end of June that a foreign country acted. That was France, which sent its soldiers back to establish a secure zone in the southwest to save those Tutsis still alive and protect Hutus from reprisals, a move that initially roused profound suspicion around the world.

The Tutsis' resentment toward tbe international community deepened when they saw aid agencies rushing to aid more than two million Hutu refugees who fled to neighbouring countries as the tide of war swung in favour of the Tutsis, the eventual victors.

Now, the United Nations has 5,500 troops in Rwanda, and human rights observers are in place, charged to prevent arbitrary arrests and abusive imprisonment, but their efficacity is questioned.

Mitterrand hallowed in his adoptive hometown

By Paul Taylor
Reuter

CHATEAU-CHINON, France — President Francois Mitterrand is ending 14 years in power reviled by many of the people who once voted for him, but in one corner of rural France he is revered almost as a latter-day saint.

The Socialist head of state is a legend in his own lifetime in Chateau-Chinon, a town of 2,500 souls in the Burgundy hills that has been his adoptive political home since 1946.

A museum dedicated to his globe-trotting presidency, the Musee du Septennat, exhibits lavish presents he received from foreign leaders, drawing some 70,000 visitors a year.

"It seemed natural to me that the gifts I received in my capacity as president should be accessible to all," says a hand-written note from Mr. Mitterrand displayed at the entrance.

He said he chose to put the four-storey museum in the Nievre department of central France because it bad returned him for 35 years as its member of parliament.

The superbly laid-out museum features everything from carved elephant tusks given by African autocrats to glittering model palm trees in solid gold with rubies as dates presented by Gulf monarches and a portrait of Mr. Mitterrand made of butterfly wings.

A tarnished silver samovar is a fading memento of a visit to former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, whose country has since collapsed, while gifts from the United States consist mainly of chunky crystal bowls with a spread-eagle logo.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad gave Mr. Mitterrand enougb ornate inlaid chairs and tables to furnish an apartment, while Israeli leaders gave him tiny, antique earthenware phials.

There are mosaics from Tunisia, porcelain vases from Eastern Europe, African masks and statues, and autographed photographs of half a dozen royal families and U.S. president Ronald Reagan.

An entire room is full of decorations he received in foreign countries. Another is crammed with his commemorative medals.

Mr. Mitterrand recently donated thousands of books he had received with personal dedications to a library in the nearby town of Nevers, the capital of Nievre. And he gave nearly 100 paintings to a newly created museum in his birthplace, Jarnae, in the western cognac-producing region of Charente.

But his biggest legacy is in the converted 18th century convent nf Saint Claire in Chateau-Chinon. the museum was inaugurated in 1986 by Pierre Beregovoy, who became Mr. Mitterrand's prime minister in 1992 and shot himself a year later after the Socialists' general election rout.

In the town hall, a plaqoe bearing his presidential symbol, a hybrid of an oak and an olive tree, proclaims: "in this room, Francois Mitterrand, mayor of Chateau-Chinon, elected president of the French Republic on May 10, 1981, first addressed the Freoch people."

Opposite the building where Mr. Mitterrand officiated from 1959 to 1981 as the small town's longest serving mayor stands a giant pop-art fountain by artists Niki de Saint-Phalle and Jean Tinguely inaugurated by the president in 1988.

The local Newsagent's shop features Mr. Mitterrand biographies, not all of them flattering, and memorabilia such as postcards of bim waving a red rose or a photo-montage of him in drag.

Although he ran the town for 22 years, Mr. Mitterrand never really lived in Chateau-Chinon.

In one of France's bizarre but widespread political practices, he lived in Paris, paid a notional rent to obtain a postal and voting address in Chateau-Chinon and stayed at the local hotel, Le Vieux Morvan, on his weekly visits.

It was in room 15 that he learned of his election as France's first Socialist President in 1981 and waved to a crowd of well-wishers from the balcony.

The hotel still receives hate mail addressed to him and the occasional bomb threat, owner Jean-Pierre Duriatti said, although nowadays the president stays with the former owner, Ginette Chevrier, when he visits the town.

Duriatti proudly displays a photogrph album of the celebrations when Mr. Mitterrand was elected, of the bus tour that took locals to the president's ceremonial inauguration and of more recent visits to his former constituency.

Chateau-Chinon has done well out of its adopted favourite son. Apart from the stream of tourists, the trumped-up village boasts a sports stadium that would be the envy of towns many times its size, retirement home, a convalescent home and a museum of period costumes.

Friends hope that Mr. Mitterrand, stricken with prostate cancer, may one day find his last resting place in the new cemetery.

Assad, Ross meet on Golan ideas

(Continued from page 1)

where he said Friday that a meeting between Syrian and Israeli military chiefs which he had hoped to arrange might not be possible in the uear future.

Syrian and Israeli chiefs of staff met in December in Washington to discuss security arrangements after an Israeli withdrawal on the Golan.

But the talks broke off in disagreement over the size of a demilitarised buffer zone between Israel and Syria.

Mr. Ross met in Israel with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres hoping to lure the top military experts back to the negotiating table.

However, he said Friday, "I would not expect the experts to get together very soon.

"But on the other hand, I think what is more important than having them get together is having the ground prepared in a way that ensures that when they do get together it will be productive," he added.

Israel demands that its demilitarised area be much smaller than that on the Syrian side.

It has proposed a 1:9 ratio, with nine square kilometres of Syrian territory to be demilitarised for each square kilometre in Israel, Israel's Maariv daily reported.

Syria has insisted on symmetry, saying it would demilitarise one square kilometre of land for each square kilometre freed of weapons and soldiers on the Israeli side.

The Americans have floated a 1:4 ratio as a compromise, Maarive said. But the Syrians were unlikely to accept that.

Syria also bas insisted that Israel commit itself to a total withdrawal from the Golan. Israel has offered only a partial and phased pull back.

"Israeli leaders are fully aware that Syria will never be dragged into unjust or unsymmetrical peace," the government daily Tishrin said Saturday. "Submitting impossible conditions will be detrimental to the peace process, whose chances of success are diminishing due to Israel's intransigence."

Israeli and U.S. officials fear that unless a settlement is concluded in tbe next few months, the opportunity for peace could be lost.

Syria said Friday it had no intention to shut down the Damascus offices of Palestinian factions opposing Arab-Israeli peace.

"There have been rumours in newspapers that vice-president Abdul Halim Khaddam told leaders of the Palestinian groups in Damascus they have to get ready to leave," Foreign Minister Sharaa said in a television interview.

"This report is baseless and devoid of truth," Mr. Sharaa told Beirut's private Future Television.

Mr. Sharaa said Damascus did not consider the 10 member of the alliance of Palestinian factions it hosts "terrorist" groups — as they are branded by the United States and some European countries which bave orged Damascus to close down tbeir offices.

"We cannot enter into an agreemeot leading to reconciliation with Israel and war with others," Mr. Sharaa said, adding Syria could not accept that "someone dictate how it acts on its own soil."

Mr. Sharaa dodged a question on how Syria woold deal with Lebanese guerrillas fighting Israeli troops in South Lebanon, once advance is achieved in peace talks with Israel.

Hizbollah, Israelis battle

(Continued from page 1)

SLA sources said guerrillas also lobbed three Katyusha rockets at an Israeli army post in tbe central sector of the 15-kilometre wide border zone, stretching from Mount Hermon in the east to the Mediterranean.

Israeli and SLA artillery rained down shells on nine villages oorth of the zone, killing 55-year-old villager Mohammad Farhat in Braachit village.

Zeroual, FFS hold talks

(Continued from page 12)

ago which Algerian press reports say has left up to 2,800 dead.

The FIS said in its newspaper that security forces "resorted to aerial bombing which sometimes last for a full week on areas suspected of harbouring armoured camps," Al Sharq Al Awsat said.

"Indiscriminate bombing hits in particular the civilians living in these areas," the group said in Al Rabat, quoted by Al Sharq Al Awsat.

The FIS cast doubt on government reports of a major defeat of Islamists in a massive army raid on the Ain Delfa region in March, in which hundreds of militants were said to have been killed.

"Having failed to draw the political classes into the presidential elections campaign, the government is filling the air with sbouts of imaginary victories," it said.

The FIS also implicitly criticised the Armed Islamic Group, a rival for leadership of the armed struggle against the state.

It said its military wing "does not consider itself the only framework for (jihad) in Algeria, but it is superior to all others in its complete adherence to Islamic Sharia law."

Tax fears dog Arab Gulf reforms

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are pressing ahead with economic reforms to cushion the impact of low oil prices but they remain reluctant to impose income taxes because of fears they could backfire, experts say.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which control 45 per cent of the world's crude oil, have announced plans to privatise public institutions and lift generous subsidies but most of them have shunned talk about taxes.

Kuwait has long imposed taxes on foreign companies but this was offset by its attractive incentives and subsidies. Oman introduced corporate taxes last year but they included exemptions for certain productive projects.

Saudi Arabia decided to tax foreign firms eight years ago but it quickly retracted the plan after it triggered mass resignations and withdrawals of companies.

"The Saudi move is still fresh in the minds of all Gulf states," said Yusuf Khalifa, economics professor at the Emirates University. "I think their main concern is how to redress their economies through non-tax means."

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), the second biggest GCC oil producer, last year ruled out income taxes to shore up its budget deficit, opting instead for hoosting non-oil revenues through investment and introduction of fees on education, health, residence and other government services.

The UAE emirate of Dubai, the Gulf's main commercial centre, Sunday quashed rumours it was about to enforce corporate taxes which could scuttle its long-standing campaign to attract foreign investment.

"The reports about taxes are unfounded," Mohammad Al Abbar, director of Dubai's economic department, told local reporters.

He said Dubai's crown prince, Sheikh Mohammad Ibn Rashid Al Maktum, assured Arab and foreign investors that there "is no change in the existing laws."

Qatar has also ruled out major income taxes while the remaining GCC member, Bahrain, imposes moderate taxes as they provide a large part of the national income given its small oil production of around 40,000 barrels per day (b/d).

GCC states produce nearly 13 million b/d of oil, providing more than 80 per cent of their total earnings. A sharp decline in oil prices and the U.S. dollar over the past decade has created a persistent deficit in their budgets and balances of payments and slowed down growth in their economies.

Combined with large payments for the allied war against Iraq, this has forced them to slash spending and resort to borrowing and withdrawal from their overseas reserves that have now sharply eroded.

The six members have tried to couple expenditure cuts with removing or easing subsidies, raising prices of petrol, electricity and other services, luring foreign investment and increasing incentives to the private sector. Some of them have also announced privatisation programmes.

The combined GCC government spending exceeded $100 billion a year during the oil boom and it was the wheel of economic activity.

In 1995, expenditure was cut to $68.7 billion from $71.4 billion in 1994. This slashed the combined deficit to $9.6 billion in 1995 from $17.3 billion in 1994, according to official figures.

"A GCC decision to impose corporate taxes at present or in the medium-term cannot be justified given its dangers," said Ihsan Abu Huleika, an economic expert at the Doha-based Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting.

"Taxes could be enforced when the private sector becomes the main contributor to the domestic economy," he wrote in the UAE daily Al Khaleej.

Lebanon raises pound prime rate to 20 per cent

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese banks Friday raised their prime lending rate to 20 per cent from 17 to discourage investor arbitrage on one-year treasury bonds yielding 19.66 per cent.

The banks also slashed the prime lending rate on U.S. dollars to 3.5 percentage points from 5.5 points above the U.S. prime rate, which is currently about nine per cent. Bankers said this was a market correction.

The latest hike in the Lebanese pound prime rate came after recent rises in yields of pound-denominated treasury bills which are the benchmark for Lebanon's reemerging financial market.

The Lebanese Banks' Association grouping Beirut's 80 banks decided on the rate changes, the first this year, at a late night meeting of its board.

"We raised the prime rate because before we did that a customer could gain through arbitrage. He would borrow Lebanese pounds from a bank at 17 per cent, then put the money in one-year treasury bonds and get 19.66 per cent," association secretary-general Makram Sader told Reuters.

Authorities have pushed up the yields on the treasury bonds in recent weeks after allowing them to fall rapidly in late 1994 — a move that contributed to a run on the pound at year end.

Now the high yields are attracting investors again. The March 30 issues, with yields ranging from between 16.55 and 19.66 per cent, posted a surplus for the first time in 1995.

Central bank governor Riad Salameh has said the treasury bill rates have reached a satisfactory level and will not rise further.

Mr. Makram's deputy, Mr. Antoine Obeid, said the banks "slashed the dollar prime lending rate to 3.5 points above the U.S. rate which is currently around nine per cent from 5.5 points above U.S."

"Borrowing dollars would now cost 12.5 per cent in Lebanon," Mr. Obeid added.

Beirut bankers said the rate change was a market reaction to maintain stability. They said it would not lead to a boost in dollar borrowings, as most banks had been actually lending at rates lower than 5.5 points above the U.S. rate.

"It is no more than an agreement between market agents for fixing prices," a banking source said of the dollar prime rate.

The bulk of credits offered by banks and bank deposits in Lebanon are in dollars. The central bank said in its latest report that dollarisation of bank credits stood at 86.81 per cent in February and dollar bank deposits stood at 61.25 per cent.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese government is considering issuing a second Eurobond to help finance postwar reconstruction, a government official said Friday.

"We are considering the need for such an issue but we have not really decided on when it will be done," Youssef Choucair, Chairman of the Lebanese Investment Authority (LIA), told Reuters in an interview.

Lebanon's first venture into the international debt market last September was highly successful. A Eurobond issue originally set at $150 million was raised to $400 million but was still heavily oversubscribed.

"There is no figure fixed yet for the second issue," Mr. Choucair said. "Last time we raised $400 million. It could be in the same order of magnitude."

Mr. Choucair, a former World Bank official and now economic adviser to billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, said parliament has already authorised the government to borrow up to $1 billion abroad.

"The balance the government is authorised of $600 million could be raised in one or more issues. The government is studying that now," he said.

"Of course it will be aimed at financing reconstruction projects. Not dedicated to a specific project but we have a selection of projects that we will consider," he added.

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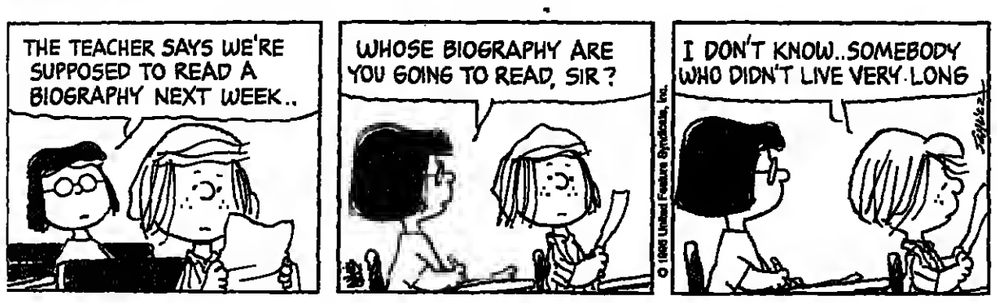
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	742,765	150.000	190.000	196.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	242,352	4.580	4.580	4.440
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	40,551	4.440	4.440	4.530
BANK OF JORDAN	2,355	3.200	3.200	3.400
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK.	25,734	1.420	1.420	1.450
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	30,475	2.750	2.750	2.480
THE HOUSING BANK	464,180	4.100	4.100	4.270
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	73,510	2.050	2.050	2.520
JORDAN GULF BANK	114,472	1.100	1.180	1.450
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	520,393	3.900	3.900	3.920
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	560	4.500	4.500	4.000
BUSINESS BANK	87,475	3.300	3.300	3.580
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	75,166	3.500	3.500	3.720
BEIT ELMAL SAVING&INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	37,475	3.020	3.020	3.150
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	888,350	1.140	1.140	1.250
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	10,873	4.000	4.000	4.100
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK.	272,271	1.240	1.240	1.530
BANKS SECTOR		3676157 CHANGE	INDEX NUMBER: 165.54 : +3.65%	
JORDAN INSURANCE	041	3.250	3.250	3.200
UNITED INSURANCE	463	2.490	2.450	2.450
ARABIAN SEAS INSURANCE	8,880	1.800	1.800	1.850
GENERAL ARABIA INSURANCE	180	3.600	3.600	3.600
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	330,033	2.610	2.610	2.730
PHILADELPHIA INSURANCE	4,400	4.400	4.400	4.600
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	3,270	2.600	2.600	2.600
DELTA INSURANCE	3,315	2.000	2.000	2.320
INSURANCE SECTOR		351801 CHANGE	INDEX NUMBER: 135.73 : +0.20%	
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	111,703	1.430	1.430	1.640
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER /NEW	399,040	1.570	1.570	1.560
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	7,203,285	7.500	7.500	7.300
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	3,735,334	6.080	6.080	7.760
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS /NEW	333,974	5.850	5.850	7.470
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	76,528	2.570	2.570	3.010
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	71,752	2.000	2.000	2.380
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	3,933	1.180	1.180	1.240
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	42,683	1.050	1.050	1.040
MACHINARY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	4,447	0.680	0.680	0.490
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRA'I	45,211	10.050	10.050	10.400
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMODORE HOTELS	988,359	2.420	2.420	2.700
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	44,065	3.320	3.320	3.350
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	4,550	1.380	1.380	1.310
SERVICES SECTOR		13107441 CHANGE	INDEX NUMBER: 145.71 : +9.74%	
ATTAHQEEP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	4,444	1.030	1.030	1.150
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	555,343	3.050	3.050	3.070
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	1,044	2.750	2.750	2.410
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	3,727	4.400	4.400	4.450
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINARY	41,172	5.350	5.350	5.430
JORDAN TANNING	3,133	7.500	7.500	7.550
WOOLEN INDUSTRIES	1,060	1.740	1.740	1.780
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	44,420	3.500	3.500	3.700
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	314,145	7.400	7.400	8.560
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	257,180	4.140	4.140	4.050
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	10,240	5.750	5.750	5.450
JORDAN DAIRY	1,233	2.330	2.330	2.400
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	31,373	2.700	2.700	2.700
THE PUBLIC MINING	285	2.850	2.850	2.850
ARAB CHEMICAL DETERGENTS INDUSTRIES	11,545	15.400	15.400	14.830
SPINNING & WEAVING	18,587	2.550	2.550	2.400
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	31,513	2.550	2.550	2.510
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	74,447	7.650	7.650	7.550
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	200,477	0.530	0.530	8.950
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY.	158,454	4.400	6.600	7.150
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	430,613	0.680	0.680	0.690
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	385,517	1.470	1.470	1.550
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	14,700	3.350	3.350	3.350
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	53,492	2.140	2.140	2.430
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	24,533	1.150	1.190	1.200
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	5,878	4.000	4.000	4.200
ALADDIN INDUSTRIES	7,537	4.150	4.150	4.440
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	48,032	0.480	0.480	0.700
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	52,309	4.540	4.540	4.700
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	53,418	1.450	1.450	1.810
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	35,576	2.300	2.300	2.240
KANTHER INVESTMENT	10,136	1.550	1.550	1.580
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	93,035	3.520	3.520	3.500
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	115,748	2.050	2.050	2.070
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR		3150942 CHANGE	INDEX NUMBER: 121.93 : +1.39%	
GRAND TOTAL		20324542	INDEX NUMBER: 144.50	

PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD [01/04/1995 - 05/04/1995]
WEEKLY REPORT

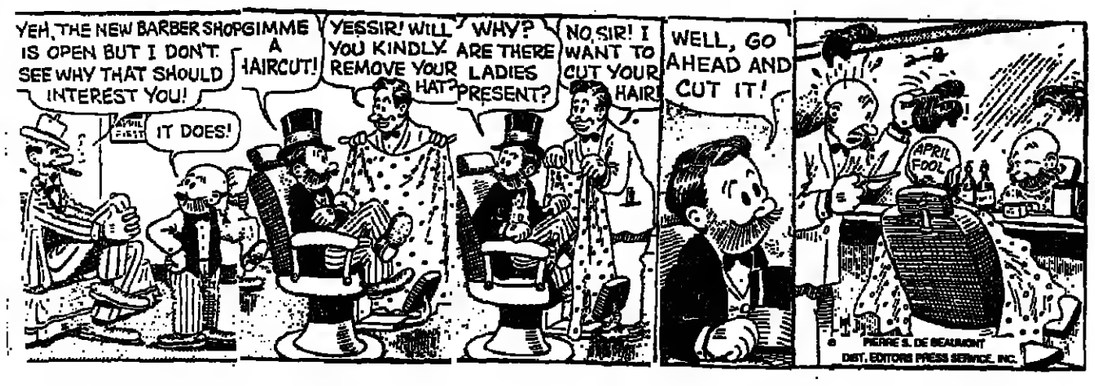
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	40,555	0.500	0.500	0.900
JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	95,380	0.770	0.770	0.770
PETRA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	41,860	1.350	1.390	1.450
UNIFIED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	230,121	1.570	1.970	2.210
ARAB FIN INV.CO	581,557	0.530	0.930	1.130
ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	14,578	1.000	1.000	1.020
NATIONAL CHLORINE INDUSTRIES CO.LTD	48,154	1.570	1.570	1.410
NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO	25,522	1.050	1.050	1.120
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	32,054	1.440	1.440	1.640
EL-EAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	100,050	2.150	2.150	2.280
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	118,007	1.520	1.520	1.570
UNIVERSAL METALS	10,485	1.580	1.500	1.530
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGATIABLE OIL INDUSTRI	8,144	2.400	2.400	2.450
JORDAN STEEL	53,544	0.950	0.950	0.950
ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	23,264	0.530	0.530	0.530
GRAND TOTAL		1444195		

Peanuts



Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF® By Glasbergen

"I don't want everyone who works here to know I rented *'Bambi'*— tell the computer I rented *'Blood Bath VII'!'*"

JUMBLE® THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VALEG

ULIPP

MEEBAC

INPANK

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: AN

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: TUNED AWFUL VALUED MATURE

Answer: Another name for a joint account — A MUTUAL FUND

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY APRIL 9, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get that new plan formulated so that you can handle all of your business affairs much better and more efficiently so you can have great progress.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have reached a stalemate with an associate today so compromise is the only answer to save the relationship which was established.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) An inspired thought early can make routines today much better and easier, so utilise it and become more productive.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be more willing to go along with the ideas of a friend even though you had made other plans for entertainment tonight with your mate.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Study the conditions at home and figure out how best to improve them with the assistance of family ties for there to be peace within.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Guard against an accident or disagreement this morning, and then you will be able to enjoy the company of congenial friends and loved ones.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be sure not to be pushed into some situation you do not like this morning, and later tonight you have better judgement.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You feel inclined to make radical changes where personal relationships are concerned, but this would only make matters worse.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You feel frustrated and want to upset the applecart this morning, but keep cool and after lunch all works better.

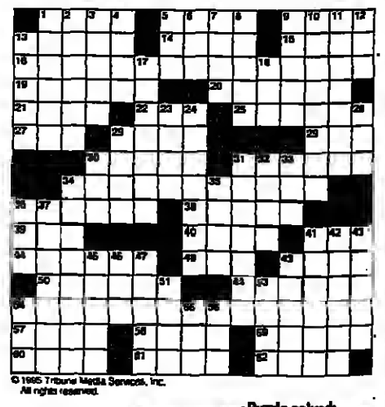
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Do not go along with that financial idea which a friend offers you since it could lead to problems which you had not anticipated.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is not a good day to get into ventures which are full of risk, so keep busy at safe routines. Show that you are altruistic.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't permit some worrisome matter to keep you from making the contacts today which can bring you greater success and prosperity.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

THE Daily Crossword by Chuck Deodene



ACROSS
1 Saharan
5 Village
9 Tennis shots
13 "A Bell for —" (Hersey)
14 Like some vaccines
15 Declare positively
16 They access illegally
19 Wound
20 Actor David Ogden —
21 Count calories
22 Political patronage
25 NYC neighborhood
27 JFK arrival
28 Pocket bread
29 A least — famine
30 Southern nut
31 "Achy — Heart"
34 Lacking spontaneity
36 Model Iran name
38 Pontificate
39 Armed forces
40 Glowing review
41 Fink
44 Endangered vulture
48 Muslim official
49 "— sabe" (trusty scout)
50 German songs
52 Ill-fated
54 Possess an agenda
57 Bit of news
58 Small group
59 Actor Quaid
60 Jumble
61 Spoke
62 Objectives

DOWN
1 Handsome youth
2 Aircraft engine
3 Enter data
4 Bullen John
6 Hockey great
7 Cheers
8 Poet Sylvia
9 Magic Johnson, once
10 Exceed weight limits
11 Frenzied
12 Some students: abbr.
13 Sulfuric, et al.
17 Representative
18 Spy org.
23 — end (over)
24 Mythical box opener
26 Month
28 Seeger
30 Witticism
31 Pretense of courage
32 Ceremony
33 Shoe width
34 Schemes
35 Haul
36 Jean— Picard of "Star Trek"
37 Quarantine
41 Jog one's memory
42 Modifies
43 Brandy drink
45 Judges
46 Harem room
47 Leases
49 Bible of Islam
51 — avis
53 Hideous one
54 That guy
55 Midnight in Rome
56 Bushy clump

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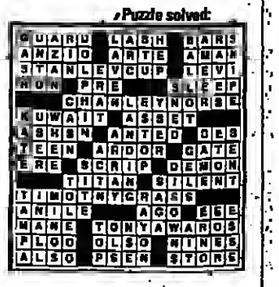
Puzzle solved:



New type of cheques to be used starting July 1

☆☆ AS OF July 1, 1995, licensed banks in Jordan will start using magnetic cheques, heralding a new period whereby the clearing process of cheques at the Central Bank will become automated. The Central Bank has already notified all licensed banks to provide their customers with new magnetic cheques that include the numbers of the client and the head office of the bank or its branches, to fit the new equipment which will be used for the automation scheme. As such, no — cheques that could be bought in the market and used at any bank — "bookshop cheques" will be exchanged and that will contribute to reduce the number of bouncing cheques. According to some studies, "bookshop cheques" accounted for 30 per cent of all bouncing cheques in the country (Al Aswaq).

☆☆ THE AGRICULTURAL Credit Corporation (ACC) is about to open an office in Aqaba to serve farmers in the region and especially fishermen. The office is expected to start operations this month (Al Dustour).

☆☆ ACCORDING TO the minister of energy and mineral resources, Jordan imports about 12,000 tonnes of Iraqi crude and fuel oil by tanks each day. As such, the minister said, transportation had to be awarded to a number of contractors because it is impossible that such a responsibility be given to each tank owner individually, especially when their number could be as high as 2,000 (Al Dustour).

☆☆ THE GENERAL assembly of the Middle East Insurance Company accepted the recommendation of the board of directors not to distribute dividends and to transfer 1994 net profit of JD 353,164 to retained earnings. The company collected JD 7.6 million in premiums last year but total paid claims amounted to JD 3.65 million (Al Aswaq).

☆☆ THE MUNICIPALITY of Greater Amman (MoGA) is likely to begin building an auxiliary typass at the Interior Ministry Circle early next month to ease traffic coming from Sweileh towards Abdali and downtown Amman. The auxiliary by pass, which will link with the main bypass going towards Jabal Al Hussein, will be 100 metres long and seven metres wide. The project, which will cost about JD 1.53 million, is expected to be completed in nine months (Al Ra'i).

☆☆THE GENERAL assembly of the Rafia Industrial Company has approved the distribution of dividends at a rate of 20 per cent. The company, which faces stiff competition from similar industries producing nylon bags, exported most of its output to Iraq last year. Rafia has decided to open a new production line and is awaiting equipment this year. The company's annual report shows that Rafia made JD 299,594 profit last year on sales amounting to JD 2.7 million. Total assets at the end of 1994 stood at JD 3.46 million. Rafia and the other companies in the same line of business produced a combined 80 million bags in 1994 (AL Aswaq).

☆☆ JORDAN has bought 18,000 tonnes of white sugar for shipment by April 30 at $428 per tonne, traders said. It reduced the original tender for 26,000 tonnes which had a sellers option to deliver in one or two lots, the first by April 20 and the second by April 30, traders said. Traders said the supplier was London-based Dreyfus and the sugar would probably be of Thai origin, although this had not been decided yet. (Al Rai + Reuter)

Saudi Arabia seeking to cut cost of aircraft deal

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia, pushing ahead with strict measures to cut spending, is seeking ways to slash the cost of a multi-billion dollar deal to buy U.S. commercial planes, experts have said.

The national flag carrier Saudia "is trying to cut the deal into portions and searching for ways and means to cut cost without necessarily having an effect on the number of planes," said a well-placed expert.

Saudi Arabia, hit by cash-flow shortages due to a drop in oil prices, managed last year to cut the price of U.S. arms deals without cancelling equipment on order by trimming maintenance, support, spare parts and other costs.

"They are after something like the arms deal ... to rationalise the order and reduce maintenance and other costs," said the expert, who is familiar with official Saudi thinking.

At a White House ceremony in February 1994, Saudi Arabia said Saudia would buy about 60 planes from Boeing Co. and McDonnell Douglas Corp. in what President Bill Clinton described as a major victory for U.S. industry.

Industry experts earlier said the deal could be worth between $6 billion and $8 billion with spare parts and engines.

Saudia later that year held talks with engine and aircraft makers in Jeddah who had hoped to complete the deal then.

But the deal is apparently being delayed by snags. Experts and bankers said these included financing terms with the U.S. Export-Import Bank, Riyadh's reluctance to make fresh financial commitments which would raise a projected 1995 deficit of $4 billion and efforts to reduce costs.

"Such deals take time. Of course Saudia is trying to squeeze the best possible deal out of suppliers and reduce unit price," said an Arab expert familiar with the talks.

The Saudi cabinet, headed by King Fahd, has directed state bodies to scrap expensive projects unless funds are readily available or if the projects are self-financing — like a $4 billion deal with ATT Corp. which would generate profit from new telephone lines.

Riyadh increased domestic air fares to boost Saudia's earnings while the airline is studying how to generate cash-flow by selling the current fleet when the modernisation starts.

Saudia has not signalled yet how the order would be divided but an Arab expert said it was inclined to eventually buy 29 Boeing 737s, 14 next-generation 777s and four to six 747s.

McDonnell Douglas could win an order for 11 MD-11s.

Bankers said Riyadh was refusing to offer a "sovereign guarantee" for 85 per cent of the deal which Washington's Export-Import Bank Export Guarantee Agency is willing to finance.

Riyadh is traditionally reluctant to take on sovereign borrowings and bankers said among options being considered is a slower delivery schedule for the jets or commercial financing.

EU gets down to EMU brass tacks as coins take form

VERSAILLES, France (R) — The European Union's (EU's) 15 member states are edging towards agreement on one of the bloc's knottiest and most divisive issues, EU officials meeting at Versailles near Paris on Saturday said.

As with many family arguments, and fuss is not about the big picture — the if and when and who of their planned economic and monetary union (EMU) — but the apparently minor question of what the single currency coins and notes will look like.

Apparently trifling that is, except that the finance ministers meeting in the former seat of French royalty know their whole grand scheme could be thrown into disarray if ordinary folk balk at trading in thier francs and marks, pounds and crowns for some new fangled Euro money.

The British, among the most sceptical on European union in the first place, are holding out to keep the queen's head on its ECU notes and coins. But few others seem keen on the idea.

Sweden wants its partners to forswear the nickel they use in making coins to protect people who are allergic to the metal. But officials said that will not be a major stumbling block.

Germany wants a fraud-proof coin — that only a German firm has the technology to produce. It also dislikes the name "ECU," laid down for the new currency in the Maastricht treaty.

Yet after hearing reports from technical experts and central banks and national mints about what the new notes and coins should look like, EU officials said ministers were approaching a political consensus, although no formal decisions were taken.

The denominations of the notes and coins are already pretty well agreed, although some countries are worried that a 500 ECU banknote (currently worth about $670) is too big and might encourage money laundering.

Belgian Finance Minister Philippe Maystadt told reporters he expected to see a firm proposal on the designs of the new money by the end of this year and called for a debate on the name.

Seagram sells stake in DuPont for $8.8b

NEW YORK (AFP) — The Seagram Company has announced it was selling most of its stake in DuPont back to the chemical group in a deal valued at $8.8 billion.

The Canadian spirits and beverage group said in a statement that some of the proceeds from the sale would be used to repay debt and "other corporate purposes" including acquisitions and share repurchases.

Seagram has been rumored in recent weeks to be close to a deal with the Japanese firm Matsushita to buy MCA for around $7 billion, which would give Seagram a major entertainment empire including universal studios.

The statement did not specifically mention MCA.

The Canadian firm had a stake of nearly 25 per cent of the U.S. chemical giant, most of which was sold back to DuPont.

Seagram received $1 billion in cash, $7.3 billion in 90-day DuPont notes equity warrants worth $440 million. Seagram sold 156 million shares, retaining 8.2 million.

DuPont chairman Edgar Woolard said the buyback "is the best use of our financial resources today," adding, "we believe our shares have been undervalued in the marketplace, so we've been contemplating a share repurchase for some time."

Seagram president and chief executive Edgar Bronfman Jr. called the deal "an outstanding transaction for Seagram."

Seagram purchased its stake in DuPont in 1981 for $3 billion, and the diversified chemical firm has been a major source of revenue for the beverage group.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 08/04/1995
السبت الفترة

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLc	700	136650	196.000	195.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	32936	157872	4.640	4.800
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	1800	8330	4.530	4.650
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK.	23350	34136	1.450	1.490
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	2850	7670	2.680	2.680
THE HOUSING BANK	19600	124980	6.270	6.420
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	225	656	2.920	2.920
JORDAN GULF BANK	23650	34656	1.450	1.460
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	7558	29485	3.920	3.870
BUSINESS BANK	7550	27162	3.580	3.590
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	2500	9618	3.720	3.860
BEIT ELMAL SAVINGSINVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1000	3200	3.150	3.200
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	169600	217806	1.250	1.280
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK.	35900	56849	1.530	1.590
BANKS SECTOR	329419	849066	INDEX NUMBER: 166.04 CHANGE	: +0.05%
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	33950	95817	2.730	2.800
THE NATIONAL AHLIA INSURANCE	8904	27602	3.150	3.100
INSORANCE SECTOR	42854	123419	INDEX NUMBER: 135.99 CHANGE	: +0.19%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	7939	13164	1.660	1.660
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER /NEW	34350	53930	1.560	1.570
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	300	2274	7.300	7.580
VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION	1000	6750	6.650	6.750
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	15525	118897	7.760	7.600
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS /NEW	1948	14318	7.470	7.450
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	2000	6080	3.010	3.030
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2150	5117	2.380	2.380
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	400	472	1.240	1.180
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	199077	562207	2.700	2.800
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	2100	7056	3.350	3.360
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	10000	12870	1.310	1.300
SERVICES SECTOR	276729	803134	INDEX NUMBER: 145.25 CHANGE	: -0.32%
ATTAQEEP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	900	1061	1.190	1.170
THE JORDAN CHEMIST FACTORIES	37674	115456	3.070	3.060
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	355	3329	9.430	9.360
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	2165	7943	3.700	3.680
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	8000	69648	8.560	8.700
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	48900	192770	4.090	4.000
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	150	405	2.700	2.700
ARAB CHEMICAL DETERGENTS INDUSTRIES	250	3625	14.830	14.500
DAR AL DARA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	3736	29900	7.950	8.000
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	139100	134510	.950	.970
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	5200	37520	7.150	7.250
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	26350	19194	.690	.670
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	47200	72968	1.550	1.540
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	5100	16324	3.350	3.240
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	2660	6630	2.430	2.550
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	7700	9565	1.200	1.240
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	2500	1730	.700	.690
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	2000	9500	4.700	4.750
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	7950	15105	1.810	1.900
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	4950	11293	2.240	2.300
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	50	.79	1.580	1.580
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	1950	6795	3.500	3.500
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	2800	5780	2.070	2.060
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	359582	771130	INDEX NUMBER: 122.01 CHANGE	: +0.06%
GRAND TOTAL	1002644	2546750	INDEX NUMBER: 146.54 CHANGE	: +0.02%

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 358770
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET : 448036

Financial Markets — Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 5/4/95	Tokyo Close Date 6/4/95
Sterling Pound*	1.6085	1.6114**
Deutsche Mark	1.3731	1.3640
Swiss Franc	1.1280	1.1200**
French Franc	4.7960	4.7725**
Japanese Yen	86.15	85.29
European Currency Unit	1.5295	1.5329**

* USD Per STG
** European Opening 6: 00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates — Date: 6/4/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.00	6.18	6.50
Sterling Pound	6.06	6.37	6.68	7.18
Deutsche Mark	4.51	4.37	4.50	4.75
Swiss Franc	3.06	3.12	3.18	3.31
French Franc	7.37	7.37	7.00	6.81
Japanese Yen	1.56	1.50	1.50	1.50
European Currency Unit	6.12	6.25	6.43	6.68

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Precious Metals — Date: 6/4/1995

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm*	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	394.15	7.60	Silver	5.44	0.100

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin — Date: 6/4/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6830	0.6850
Sterling Pound	1.1000	1.1055
Deutsche Mark	0.5006	0.5031
Swiss Franc	0.6125	0.6156
French Franc	0.1428	0.1435
Japanese Yen*	0.7999	0.8039
Dutch Guilder	0.4476	0.4498
Swedish Krona	******	******
Italian Lira*	0.0399	0.0401
Belgian Franc	******	******

* Per 100

Other Currencies — Date: 6/4/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7960	1.8010
Lebanese Lira*	0.041550	0.041570
Saudi Riyal	0.1816	0.1827
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3170	2.3700
Qatari Riyal	0.1864	0.1878
Egyptian Pound	0.1900	0.2100
Omani Riyal	1.7660	1.7740
UAE Dirham	0.1854	0.1868
Greek Drachma*	0.2775	0.3250
Cyprist Pound	1.4570	1.5350

* Per 100

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JBF announces ambitious '95 schedule

Abbadi pledges JD 10,000 sponsorship

By Aleen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — When Awwad Haddad, chairman of the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF), announced that 1995 would be the year of national basketball teams, few believed his vision would come true.

Yet although it is still too early to tell if the JBF will be able to successfully complete its bustling national team agenda, officials, coaches, players and friends of the sport are mobilising all efforts towards enabling the Kingdom's teams to participate, benefit from and score good results in their upcoming competitions.

Onlookers feel the JBF started the year on the right track when the Under-18 team clinched third place in the Asian Championship in the Philippines last month and became the first Jordanian team to qualify to a World Championship.

Since the country's sports federations have a limited budget which therefore restrains their options and capabilities, most sports teams usually hardly have more than one participation in a regional championship. However the JBF seems adamant to change that notion.

So what's next on the JBF's agenda?

☆ The Under-22 national team will participate in a charity tournament in Malaysia starting April 20.

☆ The men's team will compete in the Asian Championship in Korea June 17-26.

☆ The Under-18 youth's team will compete in the World Championship in Greece July 12-22.

☆ The women's team will participate in the Asian Championship in Japan July 23-30.

While reaching a competitive level for these championships requires serious practice, good coaches, training camps, friendly matches and dedicated officials to oversee all this, the JBF's only obstacle seems to be coming up with the necessary sponsorship.

The Municipality of Greater Amman has agreed to sponsor the U-22 team in the charity tournament in Malaysia where the team will be representing the city of Amman. In a recent meeting with the JBF board, Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi voiced his support of the JBF's activities and announced the municipality's sponsorship.

"Like everyone else, the mayor was very encouraged by the latest results of the youth's team and pledged all his support," Mr. Haddad told the Jordan Times. "The municipality has pledged JD 10,000 to cover expenses in the Malaysian tournament, participation in which is a great honour for us as we are the only Arab team to play alongside China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Russia, Australia, Malaysia and Singapore," he added.

Mr. Haddad explained that the total expenses of preparing the three national teams for their respective championships would amount to no less than JD 55,000.

Since the Ministry of Youth has only allocated JD 12,000 budget for the federation, JBF officials have to come up with the rest of the amount through various sponsors.

Mamdouh Al Abbadi

After the victorious Under-18 team returned home from the Philippines, various individuals and institutions announced donations to the JBF including JD 5,000 from the Ministry of Youth.

The JBF's women's committee is also considering a charity march, in addition to a concert to raise funds.

Women's team begins training

Meanwhile, the JBF chairman met with members of the women's national team as they began intensive training Saturday.

A possible participation in the Asian Championship will be the first for the Jordanian women's team which was last regrouped in 1983.

Mr. Haddad told the players that the JBF was serious in its latest regrouping of the national team after a 12 year absence and explained that he was contacting Eastern European teams to play in Amman in preparation for the Asian Championship.

The team is scheduled to play Hungarian and Greek team in Amman before they leave for Japan July 21.

Fourteen teams have announced their participation in the championship in which teams are divided into two groups.

Group A includes powerful Asian team China, Korea, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan.

Jordan will be playing in Group B which includes Indonesia, Hong Kong, India, Kyrgiztan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

The team will undergo a hectic five practices a week during April in order to raise their level of physical fitness, before they play a series of friendly matches in a one-day tournament on May 1.

"We have 103 days to go," head coach Fadi Sabbah said, adding he was encouraged the good lineup he had would train seriously to best prepare for the championship.

Martinez heading for 3rd final in a row

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida (Agencies) — Top seed Conchita Martinez of Spain survived a tough first set Friday before cruising into the semifinals of the Bausch Lomb Championships with a 7-5 6-0 victory over fifth seed Amanda Coetzer of South Africa.

Second seed Gabriela Sabatini routed sixth-seeded fellow Argentine Ines Gorrochategui 6-0 6-3 in another quarter-final.

In the semifinals, fourth-ranked Wimbledon champion Martinez will play third seed Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria in a rematch of last week's Hilton Head final, won easily by the Spaniard.

Maleeva brushed aside Laurence Courtois of Belgium 6-2 6-2 to earn her second consecutive final four berth.

Sabatini will square off against eighth-seeded German Sabine Hack, a 6-1 7-6 conqueror of Katarzyna Nowak of Poland.

Martinez had her hands full with the speedy 19th-ranked Coetzer in the first set as she dropped her serve in the third, fifth and seventh games.

But Martinez bared down when facing triple game point in the 12th game after Coetzer took a 40-0 lead with a chance to force a tie-break.

Squandering four game points appeared to break Coetzer's spirit and she dumped a drop shot from the baseline into the net at break point to give Martinez the set and momentum.

"The first set was so equal and she played so good and consistent, I had to fight hard to win it," said Martinez, who is now 7-0 against Coetzer.

"I think she was disappointed and started to make mistakes," Martinez said of the lop-sided second set in which Coetzer won just four points in three service games.

Sabatini steamrolled her way throught her 22-minute first set, dropping a total of just eight points and committing a mere three unforced errors.

Some costly double faults by Sabatini kept Gorrachetegui in the second set, but Sabatini rarely looked in real danger.

"In the second set, she started to be more consistent. We were both giving our best, so I enjoyed that," Sabatini said.

Agassi fights for No. 1 spot

TOKYO (AFP) — Andre Agassi has a chance to take over the world number one spot from Pete Sampras at the $1.2 million Japan Open tennis tournament which starts here Monday.

Sampras, the defending champion here, chose to forgo the tournament to play on clay at Barcelona in preparation for the French Open.

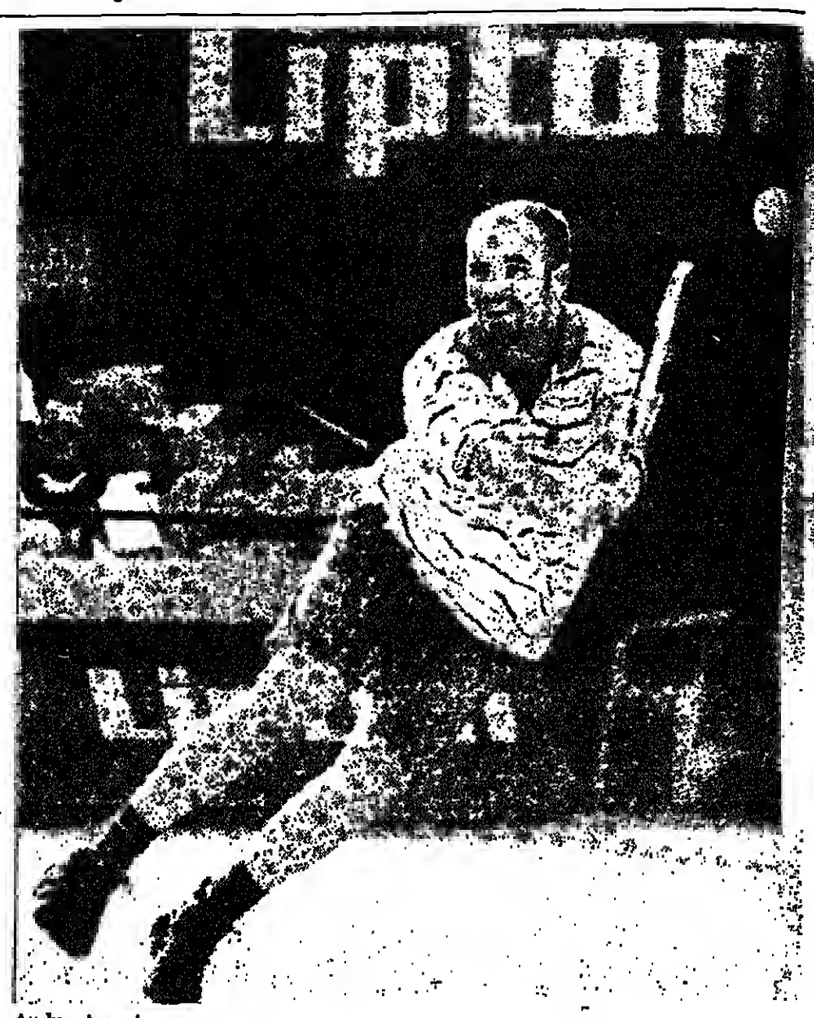
Agassi, the world number two from Las Vegas, trails Sampras by 131 points in the ATP rankings, with victories in the US and Australian Opens and Paris indoor as well as at Key Biscayne.

An ATP official said it was possible for Agassi to overtake Sampras — the winner in Tokyo will earn 230 points plus bonus points.

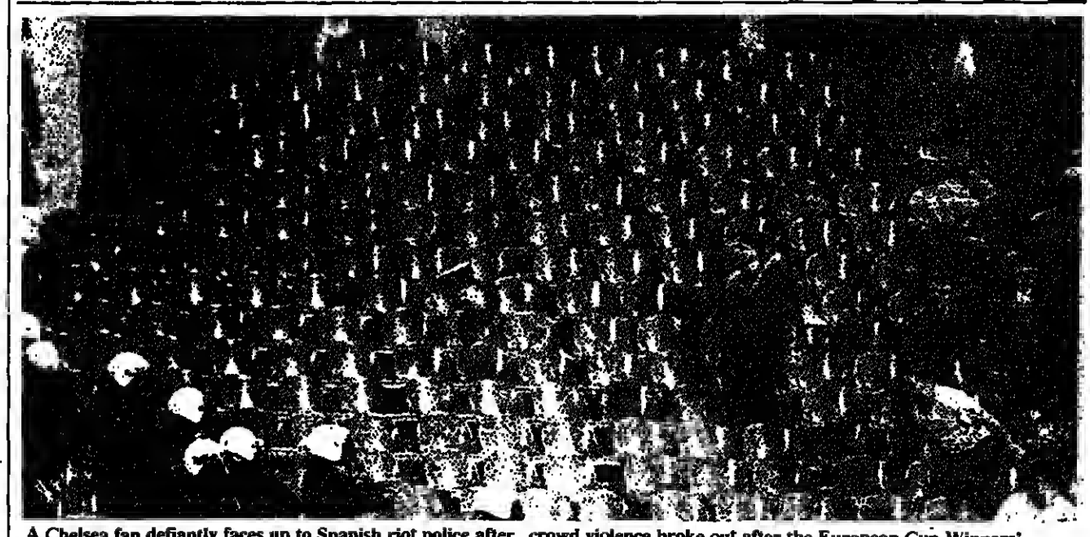
"Being number one is a reflection of how you do week after week. I don't want to be number one because I beat some kind of system. If Pete is ranked ahead of me the bottom line is I want to play him," Agassi said.

Boris Becker of Germany is also absent with a right thigh injury, leaving Americans Michael Chang and Jim Courier and Sweden's Thomas Enqvist as the major threats.

In the women's field, local favourite Kimiko Date, the world number eight, is aiming for a fourth consecutive victory. Opponents include American hard-hitters Amy Frazier and Marianne Werdel and compatriot Mana Endo.



Andre Agassi



A Chelsea fan defiantly faces up to Spanish riot police after crowd violence broke out after the European Cup Winners' semifinal. Zaragoza won 3-0 (AFP photo)

Zaragoza say: 'We were right to sell tickets'

MADRID (R) — A Real Zaragoza official defended his club's decision to sell match tickets to Chelsea fans who later caused trouble at Thursday's night's European Cup Winners Cup tie by declaring: "Spain is a free country."

Zaragoza general secretary Francisco Checa said: "Spain is a free country. There's no reason why we shouldn't have sold those tickets.

"We're just pleased last night's incidents had no impact whatsoever on the game and did not endanger Real fans."

He said material damage to the Romareda stadium was negligible.

"They ripped up 50, 60 maybe 100 plastic seats, but at 2,000 pesetas ($16) a time, the damage is very small.

He said Zaragoza had no worries about the return leg at Stamford Bridge in a fortnight's time.

"We're sure the British police will take all necessary security measures ... and there is a lot of collaboration between the two clubs in this regard."

Chelsea had asked Zaragoza not to sell tickets to their fans on the day of the match, but 300 English fans travelled to Spain and freely bought tickets on Thursday.

Chelsea chief executive Colin Hutchinson said: "We asked Zaragoza not to sell tickets to those fans arriving without them. Now you have seen the consequences of them selling the tickets."

It was generally agreed by police, Chelsea officials and Zaragoza officials that the 1700 Chelsea fans who travelled with the official supporters club caused no trouble.

"They behaved impeccably and Zaragoza have praised them," added Hutchinson.

A UEFA spokesman said it was too early to say whether any action against Chelsea and that observer Mart Tramak's report would be studied in due course.

Chelsea are already facing a UEFA investigation into trouble at Bruges in the last round.

Spanish police reported no arrests after the game which Chelsea lost 3-0.

"There was no trouble after the game ... there were a couple of minor injuries to police and fans, but very few, and none of them was serious," a police spokeswoman said on Friday.

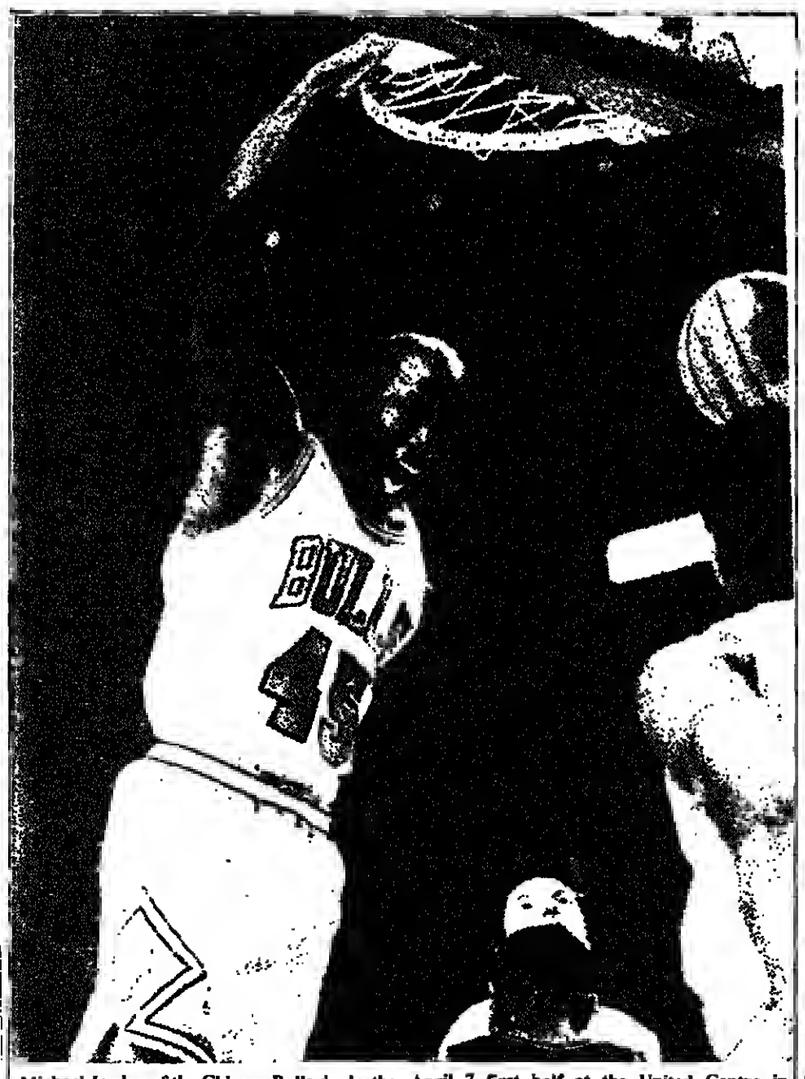
"Six Chelsea fans were detained before the match. They were held until one o'clock in the morning and handed over to the British consulate," She said.

The six were detained for unruly behaviour on a Zaragoza bus but police did not press charges.

Around 300 visiting fans ripped up seats, rampaged across a terrace behind one of the goals and confronted police.

Three policemen suffered minor injuries and national television showed a handful of fans being stretchered out of the Romareda Stadium into ambulances.

The spokeswoman said the majority of Chelsea fans were now on their way back to London and those still in the city were lodged in a single hotel.



Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls dunks the ball against the Cleveland Cavaliers in the April 7 first half at the United Centre in Chicago. The Bulls won 97-88 (AFP photo)

Marseille face new relegation

MARSEILLE (R) — Former European champions Marseille were placed in receivership on Friday, a decision which looks certain to bring a sporting penalty of relegation for the second time in 12 months.

Marseille, who have debts of 282 million francs ($56 million), had earned a stay of execution in a Marseille commercial court on Thursday before a final decision on their financial future next week.

But the court opted for an early decision after being urged to do so by club officials, anxious to clarify Marseille's position as soon as possible.

"The situation of Olympique Marseille, who have imminent difficulties such as paying the salaries of their employees, made it necessary to make a rapid decision at the request of club officials themselves," said court President Fernand Arnaud.

"Club officials are no longer permitted to run the club financially but they can keep control of the technical and sports sides.

"The financial court takes Marseille under its protection. We hope we will find a solution to rebuild the club with the help of new sponsors and of local authorities."

Marseille were relegated to the French second division last year for attempting to rig a league match in Valenciennes in May, 1993.

Clubs which go bankrupt or into receivership are forced into compulsory relegation under French League rules.

Marseille officials said they were able to finish the season but the club faces relegation to the national leagues, the equivalent of a third division, unless the team can clinch one of the three promotion spots at the end of this season.

Marseille are currently second in a close promotion race between six sides.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — National Basketball Association results and standings from Friday.

Boston	91	Philadelphia	81
Charlotte	98	Washington	93
Atlanta	102	Indiana	90
Detroit	104	Orlando	94
Chicago	97	Cleveland	88
Milwaukee	107	New Jersey	92
Dallas	111	Minnesota	94
Portland	127	Houston	109
L.A. Lakers	113	Utah	90

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Royal Athlete wins Grand National

ERPOOL (Agencies) — al Athlete, trained by y Pitman and ridden by man Jason Titley, sprang 0-1 surprise to win the ree Grand National on rday.

lways travelling well, al Athlete led for most the second circuit and y, held off the challenge 992 winner Party Politics, -1 chance ridden by Mark yer.

00-1 outsider Over The the mount of amateur Chris Bonner, finished ust ahead of Dubacilla, ot ridden by Dean Gallagher.

It was the first ride in the National for 24-year-old Titley, who came home seven lengths clear of Party Politics. Six lengths separated Party Politics and Over The Deel.

Royal Athlete was the second winner of the National for Pitman, successful in 1983 with Corbiere, and one of six runners trained by her for Saturday's National.

Master Oats, the 5-1 favourite, trying to complete a rare Cheltenham Gold Cup-National double, looked like achieving the feat halfway round the second circuit but faded in the straight under top weight.

Thirty-five runners went to post making it the smallest National field since 1980.

The race, watched by 55,000 fans from the standings and an estimated 350 million worldwide on TV, regularly is targetted by animal rights protestors who say it is cruel.

The National has claimed the lives of 13 horses in the past 26 years and four horses died at Aintree in the two days leading up to the day of the race.

McCall (left), the WBC heavyweight champion, looks over at challenger Larry Holmes (right) during the weigh-in for their title bout at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada (AFP photo)

Tucker goes after WBA title

AS VEGAS (R) — Hardly sentence goes by without ony Tucker talking about s dedication to the Lord d wanting to be a good role odel for children.

But Tucker, who will fight nce Seldon for the vacant 'orld Boxing Association VBA) heavyweight title, ants it understood that just cause he is a God-fearing an he will not be a wimp in e scheduled 12-round bout.

"In all things I do, I involve Jesus in it," Tucker ays. "I'm gonna knock him ut in Jesus' name."

Tucker is a 2-1 favourite to in the title that became acant when the WBA stripped George Foreman because he refused to fight ucker, its number-one contender. Seldon is the WBA's mber-two contender.

"It's already been prophesed that I'm gonna win this tle and after I win the title d make a name for myself m gonna take it to the inistry because kids now k at athletes as heroes," id Tucker, who holds the rd for the shortest reign a heavyweight champion. He stoped James "Buster" ouglas in the 10th round in May 30, 1987 to win the International Boxing Federation title, but lost it on August 1 to Tyson.

"I'm using this as a stepping stone for me to get my name out there so I can bring more people to Christ. That's my whole goal right now," Tucker said earlier this week.

Tucker (52-2) was asked if that meant that he thought former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson, just released from three years in prison for rape, was a negative role model.

"No, no, no," said Tucker. "He spent his time in prison ... I think he may have come out more mature, He says he's a Muslim so he got some religion, some spiritualism. Maybe that will make him a better person," Tucker said.

"But Tyson being the person he is, the fighter he is, he's good for boxing and especially good for heavyweight boxing. Everybody in the heavyweight title picture is looking forward to fighting Tyson because Tyson brings bigger gates, more money and more publicity," Tucker said.

"I look forward to fighting Tyson because I fought Tyson in a 12-round decision (1987) and I only had one hand at the time I fought him," Tucker said.

"Two days before the fight my hand was broke and I did relatively good. I didn't get hurt in the fight," said Tucker.

Klinsmann the key for Spurs against Everton

LONDON (AFP) — Tottenham Hotspur are counting on Jurgen Klinsmann to inspire victory over Everton on Sunday and take them all the way to the FA Cup final.

Leading scorer Klinsmann has the potential to unlock the door to Wembley in the Elland Road semi-final against Everton side preoccupied with avoiding relegation this season. That would open the prospect of a Wembley final against Manchester United in Alex Ferguson's side beat Crystal Palace in Sunday's other semi-final.

Joe Royle's Everton have no-one to compare with the polish and panache of the German, who has inspired Tottenham's revival under manager Gerry Francis.

"Jurgen is a winner," said Francis. "He's a sprited player who badly wants to do well. He'd never have achieved what he was in the game, in terms of winning the World Cup, if he wasn't like that. It's what you need in a team. The others have got to learn from him."

Klinsmann arrived in England with a notorious reputation. But now he's better known for driving, rather than diving, Tottenham towards their 10th FA Cup final.

He quickly learned how to handle himself in the rough-and-tumble English game and Francis said: "Jurgen has competed and battled with the best. He's taken the knocks and stick along with people like Alan Shearer and Chris Sutton."

"I expect Jurgen and Gary Mabbutt to be key figures for us because of their experience of the big occasion," he said. "They have proved they can perform under pressure."

When the season began, Tottenham's FA Cup prospects were virtually nil. Most people at the club were resigned to missing out on the competition when Spurs were thrown out by the FA over financial irregularities. But chairman Alan Sugar eventually got the ban lifted.

"It would be lovely to reach the final, but we have a tough semi to get through first," said Francis.

"Anything can happen. Everton have shown they are capable of beating good sides like Manchester United, Newcastle and Liverpool. But all four clubs involved are going to scrap because there's such a big prize. This is certainly my biggest match as a manager."

England winger Darren Anderton is battling strained knee ligaments and midfielder David Howells has a score knee.

But the major problem could be at left-back. With David Kerslake already out injured and Justin Edinburgh suspended, Francis wants to include England squad member Sol Campbell in the role. But he too is also doubtful with hamstring trouble.

Everton welcome back Paul Rideout, their 30-year-old striker who damaged knee ligaments at Leeds on February 22.

But they will be without suspended Duncan Ferguson, Vinny Samways and John Ebbrell, as well cup-tied Earl Barrett, while injury doubts concern Stuart Barlow (ankle) and skipper Dave Watson is recovering from illness.

But 14-goal Rideout proved his fitness playing for the reserves against Bolton reserves on Thursday.

"The semi-final is certainly the biggest game I've been involved with and all along it's been my target to get back for it," said Rideout.

Over the past three seasons, Spurs have won five of the six league meetings between the sides — the other match, at Goodison in December, finishing goalless.

Rideout, a scorer in the 2-1 defeat at White Hart Lane in August, said:

"Our past record against Tottenham hasn't been brilliant. We've always outplayed them but they've finished much better than we have."

For Royle, a beaten semi-final manager twice with Oldham — in 1990 and again last year — the tie is merely a temporary distraction from the task of keeping the club in the top flight.

"For Sunday, we're entirely focussed on the Cup," he said. "But if the worst comes to the worst and we don't win we'll be completely focussed on staying up.

"If I can lead the team out at Wembley I will be a very proud man. But if that final appearance was to be hand-in-hand with relegation, it would be an empty feeling."

Meanwhile, Eric Cantona's absence will cast a long shadow over Sunday's FA Cup semi-final at Villa Park were Manchester United play Crystal Palace.

Manager Alex Ferguson looks set to attempt to solve a worrying goal drought by pairing Ryan Giggs with Welsh team-mate Mark Hughes in the absence of banned Cantona and cup-tied Andy Cole.

Problems of another order are posed by the presence of leading goal-scorer Andrei Kanchelskis, whose recent antics have so angered Ferguson he may not even be picked.

Giggs is likely to be switched to the centre from his usual wide role to plug the gap, despite the Welsh wizard's goal haul for the season totalling just four.

Since the 9-0 demolition of Ipswich a month ago — when Cole hit five — Cup holders United's scoring machine has splattered uncovincingly, failing entirely in three of their last four games.

Ferguson knows relegation-threatened Palace will relish in their role of outsiders and predicts: "They will fight like dogs of war to stop us getting through.

"Semi-finals are traditionally nervous affairs with League form often counting for very little, but our sights are set on Wembley now — and we'll give it everything we can.

"I'm well aware we've needed extra-time and even a replay to get through our last two FA Cup semi-finals, but it doesn't bother me if we have to do it that way again and I'm sure it doesn't bother the players either.

"It will be well worth any effort if reaching Wembley makes up for any disappointment we might have in the league."

Fifteen-goal winger Kanchelskis angered Ferguson by revealing he had been given eight pain-killing injections for a stomach injury to get him through the European Championship qualifier against Scotland last week.

Kanchelskis, who has also upset Old Trafford with claims he is unhappy at the club and wants to move on, remains a big doubt for the semi-final.

But Ferguson is unlikely to draft in 20-year-old marksman Paul Scholes who is only just fit again after ankle ligament problems.

Scholes came through a reserve game on Tuesday, but with skipper Steve Bruce still under suspension, Ferguson needs all the experience he can muster.

That tips the balance in favour of the untried Welsh international tandem of Giggs and Hughes down the middle.

Palace are back to strength for the crucial tie with John Salako recovering from a strained hamstring and Eric Young (groin) and Chris Coleman (ankle) winning their injury battles.

Republic of Ireland international Ray Houghton, a recent signing from Aston Villa, two FA Cup winners medals, has been boosting the young side's confidence ahead of the biggest game of their lives.

"I look through this team and there are a good few players who would get in many of the top Premier League teams," he said.

"There's some excellent talent and I was surprised how young many of them are. For example, John Salako, who seems to have been around as long as me, is only 26."

Palace manager Alan Smith added: "I've always said I've got good players but I would, I'm biased. I've brought most of them through. But I've heard Ray Houghton say to them: "I've played in a lot of teams and you're better than you think you are."

Houghton, who won two league and FA Cup titles in his Liverpool hey-day, concluded: "We've got a few stars of the future in this Palace team and the potential is definitely there.

"We're very much the underdogs again. United are the best team in the league.

FA CUP SEMIFINALS

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

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Both vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
♠ 5
♡ A J 8 4
◇ K 8 7
♣ K Q 10 9 2

WEST
♠ 10 8 4
♡ 3
◇ J 10 4 2
♣ A J 5 4 3

EAST
♠ A J 9 7 6 3
♡ 9 2
◇ A Q 3
♣ 7 6

SOUTH
♠ K Q 2
♡ K Q 10 7 6 5
◇ 9 6 5
♣ 2

The bidding:

East	South	West	North
1 ♣	2 ♡	2 ♠	4 ♣
Pass	4 ♡	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Opening lead: Four of ♣

There are times when a defender will be in a quandary as to how to proceed. That player will then have to rely on partner to chart the course for the defense. This hand, from the British Trials to select a team for the 1994 World Championship to be held in Albuquerque, N.M., is a classic example.

The auction was routine except for North's jump to four clubs, which showed the values for a raise to four hearts and a side club suit. It might seem routine for the contract to be defeated, since as the cards lie, there are five losers on top. Yet at only one of the seven tables did the contract go down.

At all seven tables West led a spade, taken by East's ace. At all seven tables East returned a club, taken by West's ace. This is where the predicament arose—West had to decide whether to shift to a diamond or play partner for a singleton club and continue the suit for a ruff. Six of the seven Wests returned a club. Declarer inserted the nine and had the rest of the tricks.

Only one West shifted to the jack of diamonds—Scotland's Barnet Shenkin. His decision was based on confidence in the defensive skill of his partner, Victor Silverstone. The contract was unlikely to be defeated, unless East held the ace of diamonds. In that event, if East did not want a diamond shift and was prepared to ruff a club, East should have cashed the ace of diamonds *before* shifting to a club.

With that morsel of logic to guide him, West tabled the jack of diamonds at trick three. That netted the defenders three diamond tricks and a two-trick set, while paying partner a fine compliment.

INVESTMENT IN TOURISM PROJECTS ON THE EASTERN DEAD SEA SHORE

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation - Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) is conducting engineering studies for the following areas on the Eastern Dead Sea Shore.

- **Suweimeh**
- **Zara**
- **And other areas/Dead Sea.**

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Secretary General
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Iraq denies it accepts oil plan

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz has sharply criticised the president of the Security Council for allegedly saying Mr. Aziz had accepted a resolution to allow Baghdad to sell a limited quantity of oil.

"I heard that the president of the council told the press after his meeting with me tbat 1 have accepted the Argentine resolution, or that was his perception," Mr. Aziz said after a previously arranged meeting with Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

"I'm shocked to hear that wrong statement," the Iraqi minister added. "What 1 explained to him (the council president) is that 1 have strong and basic reservations on that resolution."

Told that the council president, Karel Kovanda of the Czech Republic, had in fact told reporters that Mr. Aziz had not rejected the resolution and might accept it if some Iraqi conditions were met, Mr. Aziz replied: "There will be (that would be) another resolution.

"Before I left Baghdad I was asked the same question. If there are essential changes in this resolution, then there will be another resolution, or another resolution in essence."

Asked if he would accept such a resolution, he replied: "I will consider it on the basis of my position that it should not infringe on the sovereignty of Iraq and it should not prejudice the implemention of paragraph 22."

He was referring to a section of a 1991 resolution linking the end of sanctions against Iraq to the fulfilment of disarmament requirements.

Mr Aziz is here ahead of a report next week by a special U.N. commission charged with destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

France and Russia have readied a measure to lift the U.N. oil embargo against Iraq if the report is positive, a move the United States already has threatened to veto.

Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. monitoring commission, said last week he was worried that Iraq has not been able to account for 17 tonnes of material that could be used to grow the bacteria used in biological weapons.

The latest proposal would allow Iraq to sell the oil to buy food and medicine.

Baghdad could spend half the proceeds from the oil sales, but 30 per cent would go to Kuwait as war reparations and 20 per cent to the United Nations to pay for its operations in Iraq.

Baghdad also rejected an earlier U.N. offer for a one-time sale of oil worth $1.6 billion, saying U.N. conditions infringed on Iraq's sovereignty.

Dr. Ghali "reiterated his support for the oil-for-food formula, as a first step towards the alleviation of the suffering of the Iraqi people," a U.N. statement said. He "stressed the importance of Iraq's cooperation with the United Nations," the statement said.

Mr. Aziz declined to detail his objections in the current resolution, sponsored by

(Continued on page 7)

NEWS IN BRIEF

PNA police round up stolen cars

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian police on Saturday began to round up cars stolen from Israel and driven to tbe self-rule Gaza Strip. Police set up roadblocks throughout the Strip to carry out identity checks and take notes of the cbassis and engine numbers of new-looking cars. The crackdown came after 30 days grace for Palestinian drivers to hand over stolen vehicles, police chief Ghaza Jabali said. On March 1 police published notices in the press giving drivers up to April 5 to register their cars. "During this period we managed to register 1,500 cars whicb were stolen in Israel," General Jabali said. "We do not allow any car stolen in Israel to be driven around the Gaza Strip because we are not thieves. Everyone must respect the law," he added. He did not explain how the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) planned to hand back the cars to Israel. "This issue will be discussed at a political level," he said.

Mandela begins Gulf mission

KUWAIT (AFP) — South African President Nelson Mandela arrived here on Saturday on the first leg of a mission to improve trade links with four Gulf countries, officials said. Mr. Mandela, making his first visit to Kuwait, was expected to meet the country's emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, on Sunday before going on to Qatar on Monday, the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, and Bahrain on Wednesday. Since 1991 Gulf countries have sought to improve economic ties with South Africa, a process which was hastened after United Nations sanctions against Pretoria's former apartheid regime were lifted in 1992. Kuwait currently supplies South Africa with two million tonnes of crude a year.

Iraqi oil minister to visit Qatar

DOHA (R) — Iraqi Oil Minister Safa Hadi Jawad is due to visit Qatar on Sunday for talks with Qatari oil officials. Officials said on Saturday that Mr. Jawad's official talks in Qatar, a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), will last until April 12. They did not give more details. Iraq's ambassador to Doha, Sabri Abdul Razzak, told Reuters the Iraqi minister would be in Doha until April 14 and Western oil industry sources said he would probably be meeting officials from international oil companies after his official talks.

Nateq-Nouri postpones visit to Qatar

DOHA (AFP) — Iranian Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri has postponed a planned visit to Qatar on Saturday, a Qatari Foreign Ministry official said. Mr. Nateq Nuri, one of the most influential figures in Iran, was forced to postpone the trip because of other commitments, the official said. The Iranian Foreign Ministry in Tehran said meanwhile that Mr. Nateq Nuri would visit Kuwait on Sunday before travelling to Sudan.

Iranian newspaper attacks protesters

NICOSIA (R) — An Iranian newspaper on Saturday blamed what it called "anti-revolutionaries" for recent protests in Iran and said an iron fist should be used against them. "They need an iron fist to prevent them from succeeding in their nasty mission to destroy what has been achieved through unprecedented sacrifice — the Islamic Republic," the official news agency IRNA quoted the English-language Tehran Times as saying in an editorial. About 200 youths staged protests on April 4 in a Tehran subrub to demand better fresh water supplies and complain about bus fare increases. The protests, which turned into wider demonstrations against economic hardships, marked the most serious unrest in Iran for months. At least one person was killed and dozens were injured in clashes with police.

Diplomats visit Kabul with U.N.

KABUL (AFP) — A team of Pakistan-based diplomats and U.N. officials flew into Kabul Saturday for a one-day fact-finding mission in the war-torn Afghan capital. A U.N. spokesman said the visit was unofficial, and that the diplomats — representing the European Union, Britain, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States — would visit humanitarian projects run by the world body. He also said the group would meet with representatives of non-governmental organisations based in the capital during their seven-hour stay, but would not meet any representatives from the Afghan government.

Regent visits GHQ

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday paid a visit to the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces.

Prince Hassan was received by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Mirai. The Regent also visited the Royal Land Forces and the Hussein Ben Ali Brigade.

At the end of the tour, Prince Hassan visited the Royal Special Forces (See photo)

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah is the commander of the Royal Special Forces (Armed Forces photo)

'Strike' fizzles in Bahrain

MANAMA (Agencies) — An apparent attempt to stage a general strike after months of unrest fizzled Saturday, although riots were reported when police arrested four suspected arsonists.

Rumors that a strike was planned for Saturday had been circulating for several days, but tbere did not appear to be any organisation and many people were confused about what they should do.

Young boys shouted at shopkeepers in the central market to close, but were quickly chased away by police, witnesses reported.

Security sources said telepbooe workers and personnel at the works, power and water administration initially refused to go on repair or installation assignments, fearing that agitators would attack them.

Most of these workers are Shiite Muslims, who make up more than half the 500,000-strong indigenous population, and comprise most of the poor in Bahrain.

They have been hardest hit by worsening unemployment, a phenomenon with which most Gulf states are now having to come to grips.

But tbe sources said that by mid-morning, the workers realised there was no strike and resumed normal operations.

There was little other evidence of any work disruptions as the week began.

Any shop that did close was marked for investigation, security sources said.

Bahrain has been hit by sporadic outbreaks of violent protests since December. Authorities say five policemen have been killed in the violence, but dissident groups in exile claim that several protesters have also been slain.

The December riots, which lasted two weeks, were triggered by protests which mainly involved young Shiite Muslims. They demanded better job opportunities and the restoration of parliament, launched in 1971 and suspended in 1975 after it criticised the government.

The trouble has flared intermittenty since then, with an increase in violence, including firebomb attacks on police and the bombing of electrical installation and other public utilities.

The situation has been relatively calm for several days after a dialogue was opened between community leaders and senior government officials.

However, two overnight arson attacks sparked early morning rioting in the villages of Dumistan and Karzakan, about 25 kilometres southwest of downtown Manama when police moved in to arrest four suspects.

The four were injured while resisting arrest, local residents reported.

They claimed live rounds were fired. But security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said only one shot was fired in the air to disperse protestors.

Bahraini newspapers said four teenagers arrested by police have admitted they burned down a video shop to destabilise the country.

IAF wins JMA elections; dispute over W. Bank representation unresolved

By Beatrix Immenkamp
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The influential Islamist movement took control of the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) in Friday's elections, official results sbowed Saturday, but a controversy over West Bank representation in the association's council remained unresolved.

Bassem Dajani became the first Islamic Action Front (IAF) member to win the presidency of the association's executive council in which six other IAF candidates won seats in elections beld at four different polling stations in the country.

Three other seats on the council went to National Unity bloc candidates while the Ministry of Health and the association are in disagreement on who holds the 10th seat which the association has traditionally reserved for representing the association's West Bank members.

According to results announced by Secretary General of the Ministry of Health Hani Oweis Saturday morning, the 10th seat should go to a locally elected candidate, Dr. Mohammad Bataineh. But the chairman of the election committee, Riyadh Nawaiseh, immediately announced the association's decision to reserve the 10th seat for the West Bank delegate as he read out a list of only nine newly elected council members, excluding Dr. Bataineh.

Since 1968, only nine of the executive council's 10 members have been elected by the general assembly in Amman. The 10th member has until now been a representative of West Bank physicians, elected in separate elections in Jerusalem within two month of the Amman elections. Currently, the West Bank seat is held by Dr. Farouk Abdul Rahim.

The minister of health had instructed the association Thursday night to elect the 10th council member locally, but members on Friday defied this order, which they said amounted to interference in the association's laws.

In its annual meeting held only last week, the association's general assembly reconfirmed a statute according to which a seat is reserved for a West Bank delegate.

It was not clear how the Ministry of Health and the association would resolve the conflict, wbich, according to the outgoing president, Ishaq Maraka, could have been avoided if the minister's instructions had reached the association prior to its annual meeting on March 31.

Dr. Dajani told the Jordan Times that the government had tbe option of taking the matter to the High Court, or of reconvening the association's general assembly, asking members to revoke last week's decision to reserve a seat on the council for a West Bank delegate, a decision by which the association is now legally bound.

Only 2,446 of the association's 7,521 members took part in the the association's 22nd elections, held in Amman, Karak, Irbid and Ma'an between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Friday. Only 4,800 members were eligible to vote after paying their annual dues. Dr. Dajani won 985 votes, Mohammad Oran 887 and Haider Madani 567.

Two new members to join the council are Nazih Ababneh (908 votes) and Nabil Mehiar (786) from the Islamic Action Front. Reelected members are Ahmad Armouti (1027), Dawud Al Muhtasib (1,022), Yousef Othman (996), Mahmoud Qatarneh (908), Ja'afar Al Hunaiti (848), Yousef Al Muasber (821) and Adam Al Abdullat (766).

Iraqi Kurds declare truce

DOHUK, Iraq (Agencies) — One of the two rival Iraqi Kurdish militias declared a temporary ceasefire after four months of factional fighting, a Kurdish spokesman said on Saturday.

The Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) called a two-week cessation of hostilities in its feud with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) on Friday night, KDP spokesman Shukri Nerwe told Reuters.

"The unilateral ceasefire bas been announced in the hope the other side will respond and we can sign an accord," he said.

Turkey, with 35,000 troops hunting separatist Turkish Kurd rebels in north Iraq, bas tried to bring the Iraqi Kurd rivals together to secure its border.

A Turkish Foreign Ministry official met KDP leader Massoud Barzani last week to persuade him to make peace with PUK and concentrate on guarding the Turkish-Iraqi border against Kurdish rebel infiltration.

Turkey invited Mr. Barzani to make a rare official visit to Ankara to discuss the future of the region.

Fighting between KDP and PUK, on-and-off adversaries since the 1970s, broke out in December over alleged non-payment of taxes to the Kurdish regional administration.

Previous mediation efforts bave failed.

The main obstacle to an agreement is the status of the PUK-held city of Erbil, seat of Kurdish power in Iraq.

The Iraqi Kurds, who broke from Baghdad after the 1991 Gulf war, are protected from possible Iraqi attack by Western air power based in southern Turkey.

Warship captain complains Iraq blockade unenforceable

MANAMA (AP) — The captain of a British guided missile destroyer patrolling the Gulf says the U.N. sanctions against Iraq "uneoforceable" and a "paper tiger" unless he is given more suppon from Gulf states, the Gulf News daily has reported.

"We're the policemen, but without adequate support from all concerned... there's very little point in the policeman arresting the culprits if the courts are not prepared to prosecute." Captain Laurie Hopkins told the Dubai English-language newspaper.

Capt. Hopkins commands HMS Liverpool, which was berthed off Dubai after escorting a tug to the neighbouring United Arab Emirates port of Ajman earlier this week after its was found to be carrying sanction-busting contraband.

The tug had been stopped and boarded by the U.S. Navy's USS McCluskey in February, and both U.S. and British navies had to wait weeks until they could arrange for a regional port to accept the vessel, the officer said.

There have been similar delays with several other vessels detained since October.

Capt. Hopkins said the tug was carrying 800 tonnes of Iraqi fuel oil worth $2115,000 and was towing an Iranian-owned barge. It had a Sri Lankan master and eight Indian crewmen.

Ports accept such vessels have to hold them until the U.N. Security Council's Sanctions Committee investigates, which can take some time.

Shipping executives said the Gulf countries are loath to get involved in this legal process, especially as some of the ships stopped by the allied navies fly their flags or those of their partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The U.S. Navy leads the international maritime force enforcing the trade embargo imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

The difficulties cited by Capt. Hopkins did not come to light until the allies concentrated the maritime monitoring operation in the Gulf last summer, when Iraqi ports began operating again following the 1991 Gulf war.

Until then, interceptions had centred in the Red Sea among shipping to and from Aqaba.

Capt. Hopkins told Gulf News that during the Liverpool's tour in the Gulf, his men had boarded four "legitimate" ships suspected of breaching sanctions but were found to be carrying foodstuffs to Iraq, which are permitted under the embargo.

But in the main, he said, the naval forces have noted that ships are carrying Iraqi petroleum products from Iraqi ports, hugging the coast to make for Iranian ports where they would claim they had loaded the cargo before sailing south.

"There seem to be a number of individuals who're doing this, selling the oil for a profit and producing bills of lading from private individuals in Iran. We can't touch them." Capt. Hopkins said.

The Liverpool completes its six-month tour of duty in the region next week with joint exercises with U.S., French and Omani warships in operation Khanjahaar, before heading home.

The destroyer is part of the "armilla patrol," the royal navy force, usually two warships, which regularly patrols the Gulf.

The Liverpool will be replaced by HMS Sheffield off Oman. The Sheffield then moves to Kuwait for manoeuvres in the northern Gulf, the newspaper said.

Zeroual and FFS discuss elections

TUNIS (Agencies) — Algerian President Liamine Zeroual held talks on Saturday about a promised presidential election with one of the country's main secular opposition parties, the Socialist Forces Front (FFS), state-run Algerian radio said.

The FFS, led by war veteran Hocine Ait Ahmad, who now lives in Europe, had earlier refused to meet Mr. Zeroual.

The party was one of seven groups, including the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which signed a January accord in Rome demanding an interim government be established in Algeria before a presidential election was held.

Mr. Zeroual has promised the poll will be held this year, saying it would give Algeria's 26 million people a direct say in ending three years of violence pitting the army-backed authorities against militants.

The government rejected the Rome deal as interference in Algeria's internal affairs. It particularly criticised the FFS leader and that of the National Liberation Front (FLN), the sole former Algerian ruling party, for taking part.

The FLN leadership met Mr. Zeroual for talks about the poll last Sunday and urged the president to open talks with the militants.

The FFS delegation was led by Mustapha Buuhadef, acting secretary-general, who said in a recent interview: "It is categorically excluded that we will participate in presidential elections as they are engineered and prepared presently. But if the authorities show goodwill, there will be no problem."

In Algeria's western city of Tlemcen on Friday a bomb exploded and wounded several people, the Algerian newspaper El Watan said on Saturday.

The target of the blast was apparently a motel used by prostitutes, the paper said.

Interior Minister Abdul Rahman Meziane-Cherif said Saturday. Algeria has lost 100 billion dinars ($2.2 billion) in the three-year-old militant campaign of violence and sabotage.

The minister, quoted by the Egyptian government daily Al Ahram, said the money lost could have paid for "400,000 new homes."

He added that as well as material losses the fundamentalist violence had "damaged Algeria's image as a state and as a nation."

Around 3,000 acts of sabotage were carried out by militants in 1994 alone, according to official figures.

Militants launched their campaign after the government cancelled the second round of elections in January 1992 which the FIS was poised to win.

The U.S. State Department says the unrest has cost 30,000 lives, a figure the military-backed government rejects as exaggerated.

The government launched an offensive against armed Islamic militants two weeks

(Continued on page 7)

COLUMN 8

British museum to offer visitors fake faeces

LONDON (R) — A museum of health and hygiene where visitors will be encouraged to handle imitation faeces and flush them down a transparent toilet is to open in Britain on Sunday. Stuart Warburton, spokesman for the Abbey Pumping Station Museum at Leicester in the English midlands, said its "flushed with pride" exhibition would lift the lid on the world of water, sewage and hygiene. "We want to raise people's awareness of the fact that we are not living in a totally sanitised world," he said. A display of about 10 toilets includes one which talks to visitors and encourages them to wash their hands. "Britons traditionally don't like to mention this subject, but water supply and sewage services have been vital in improving the health of the nation, and it is an area which increasingly intrigues many," the spokesman said.

2 Indian MPs jailed for raping 1,000 women

BOMBAY (AFP) — A court has sentenced two lawmakers from India's ruling Congress (I) Party to prison for 10 years for running the country's largest reported sex-cum-blackmail racket, officials said here Friday. Judge Mridula Bhatkar, banding down the sentence to Pandit Sapkale and Sanjay Pawar, said they forced up to 1,000 women into the racket after raping them in the western town of Jalgaon. Police accidentally busted the sex-and-blackmail racket last year while questioning one of the several suspects detained in connection with the 1993 serial bombings which left some 300 people dead in Bombay. Bombay is the state capital of Maharashtra where Jalgaon is located. Judge Bhatkar, while handing down the sentence in Pune near Jalgaon, said Mr. Sapkale and Mr. Pawar lured women to a hotel on the pretext of giving them a job and then raped them. The two photographed or video-taped their victims during the assault and later coerced them to have sex with friends, industrialists and politicians in the prosperous township. The police estimate that between 500 and 1,000 women or teenaged girls were forced into the flourishing flesh trade by the two Congress politicians in the country's largest reported sex scandal.

Power, money turn men to adultery — report

LONDON (R) — Wealthy professional men are more likely to commit adultery than women and manual workers, Britain's largest sex survey revealed Friday. A conference at Edinburgh's Institute of Biology heard that only two per cent of unskilled men had extra-marital affairs, compared with 10 per cent of white-collar males. Four per cent of women cheated on their partners with no noticeable differences between the classes. "Social class and educational level make no difference to whether women have been adulterers in the past five years but a lot as to whether men have," said survey author Kaye Wellings. About 80 per cent of people believe that sex outside marriage is wrong, she said. Sixty per cent of women and 30 per cent of men in the 45-59 age group reported only one partner throughout their life. She also said oral sex was becoming more common as sexual practices are being more openly discussed in the media, particularly women's magazines. The average age at whicb people have their first sexual experience is 17 for both sexes. A generation ago, women had their first sexual experience one year later than men, at an average age of 21. "The gap is indeed closing and there can be all sorts of social and cultural reasons which have nothing to do with morality," said Ms. Wellings. The survey was prompted by the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. It was designed to provide information on sexual behaviour and the spread of AIDS, a deadly disease which destroys the body's immune system.